



CHARLES XII. King of  
SWEDEN.



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THE  
HISTORY  
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IN EIGHT BOOKS.

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(Complete)

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THE  
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CHARLES XII.  
KING of SWEDEN.

BOOK I.

**C**HARLES XII. King of Sweden, a man the most extraordinary, perhaps, that ever appeared in the world, was born June 27. 1682. All the great qualities of his ancestors were united in him; nor had he any other fault or misfortune, but that he carried them beyond all bounds.

At six years old he was taken from the women, and put under the tuition of Mr. de Nordcopenfer, a wise and understanding man. The first book he was made to read was Puffendorff's introduction to the history of Europe, that he might be soon made acquainted with his own dominions, and those of his neighbours. He then learnt the German language, which he ever after spoke as well as his mother tongue. At seven years old he could manage a horse; and the violent exercises he delighted in, and which discovered his inclinations to war, laid early the foundation of a vigorous constitution, which enabled him to support the fatigues his temper led him to undergo.

Though good natured in his infancy, he discovered an invincible obstinacy; the only way to gain upon him was to touch upon his honour; if they named



but glory, they could get any thing from him. He had a great aversion to learning of Latin ; but when they told him that the kings of Polland and Denmark understood it, he soon applied himself to it, and retained so much of it, as to be able to talk it all the rest of his life. They endeavoured to engage him to learn french after the same manner ; but he could not be prevailed upon, so long as he lived, ever to make use of it, not even with the French ambassadors who understood no other language.

As soon as he had some little knowlege in Latin, they made him read Quintus Curtius ; and he took a fancy to that book, which the subject inspired him with rather than the style. The person who explained this author to him, having asked him what he thought of Alexander, *I think*, says the prince, *that I would be like him : But*, says the other, *he lived but two and thirty years. Ah !* replies he, *and is not that enough, when one has conquered kingdoms ?* They did not fail to carry these answers to the king his father, who, upon hearing them would cry out, this child will excel me, and even go beyond the great Gustavus. One day he was diverting himself in the king's apartment with looking upon two plans, the one of a town in Hungary, taken by the Turks, from the emperor, and the other of Riga the capital of Livonia, a province conquered by the Swedes about a century ago. Under the plan of the town of Hungary were these words taken from the book of Job, *The Lord gave it to me, the Lord hath taken it from me ; blessed be the name of the Lord.* The young prince, upon reading this, strait took a pencil, and wrote under the plan of Riga, *The Lord hath given it to me, and the devil shall not take it from me.* Thus in the most indifferent actions of his childhood, some little traces of his resolute disposition would often fall from him, which discovered what he would one day be.

He was eleven years old when he lost his mother

Ulric Eleonora, daughter of Frederick III. King of Denmark, a princess of great virtue, and worthy of greater confidence than her husband reposed in her.

His father Charles XI. died within four years after her, on the 15th of April 1697, in the forty second year of his age, and the thirty seventh of his reign.

He left to his Son, then fifteen years old, a throne secured and respected abroad; subjects poor, but valiant and loyal; a treasury in good order, and managed by able ministers.

Charles XII. upon his coming to the crown, not only found himself absolute and undisturbed master of Sweden and Finland, but also of Livonia, Carelia, and Ingria; he was farther possessed of Wismar, Wibourg, the isles of Rugen, Oesel, and the most beautiful part of Pomerania, with the dutchy of Bremen and Verden, all the conquests of his ancestors, and secured to the crown by long possession, and the solemn treaties of Munster and Oliva, supported by the terror of the Sweddish arms. The peace of Ryfwick, begun under the direction of the Father, was concluded under that of the son; and he found himself the mediator of Europe, from the moment he began to reign.

The laws of Sweden fix the majority of their kings to the age of fifteen years. But Charles XI. who was intirely absolute, put off the majority of his son, by his last will, till he should come to be eighteen; and by this disposition he favoured the ambitious views of his mother Eduiga Eleonora of Holstein, the dowager of Charles X. who was appointed by the king her son, to be guardian to the young king her grandson, and regent of the kingdom, in conjunction with a council of five persons.

One day in the month of november, the same year that his father died, when he had been taking a review of several regiments, and Piper the counsellor of state stood by him, the king appeared quite lost in a depth of thought. *May I take the liberty, says Piper*

to him, *of asking your majesty upon what it is that your thoughts are so seriously employed? I am thinking,* answers the king, *that I am capable of commanding these brave fellows yonder, and don't care that either they, or I, should receive orders from a woman.* Piper immediately laid hold of the opportunity of railing his fortune, and knowing his own interest sufficient to venture on so dangerous an enterprize, as removing the queen from the regency, and hastening the king's majority, he proposed the affair to count Axel Sparre, who was a man of spirit, and sought to make himself considerable: he flattered him with the thought of being made the king's confident, which Sparre very easily believed, took the whole upon himself, and laboured for none but Piper. The counsellors of the regency were soon drawn into the scheme, and hastily proceeded to the execution of it, that they might thereby the more readily recommend themselves to the king's esteem.

They went in a body to propose it to the queen, who did not in the least expect such a declaration. The states general were then assembled, and the counsellors of the regency laid the matter before them. They were all unanimous in their approbation, and the point was carried with a rapidity, that nothing could withstand; so that Charles XII. did but wish to reign, and in three days the states conferred the government upon him. The queen's power and interest fell in an instant, and she afterwards led a private life, which was more suitable to her age, though less to her humour. The king was crowned on the 24th of December following. He made his entry into Stockholm upon a sorrel horse, shod with silver, having a scepter in his hand, and a crown upon his head, amidst the acclamations of a whole people, adorers of every novelty, and forming to themselves great expectations from a young prince.

The ceremony of the consecration and coronation belongs to the archbishop of Upsal, and is almost the



only privilege remaining to him among so many as were claimed by his predecessors. After having anointed the king according to custom, whilst he was holding the crown in his hands, in order to put it upon his head, Charles snatched it hastily from the archbishop, and crowned himself, looking sternly all the while upon the poor prelate. The crowd, who are always easily imposed on by an air of grandeur, applauded this action of the king. Even those who had groaned most under the tyranny of the father, were betrayed into the folly of praising in the son that stern behaviour which was the presage of their slavery.

As soon as Charles was become the master of the government, he gave his ear and the management of affairs to counsellor Piper, who was in reality his first minister, though he wanted the name. He soon after created him a count, which is a dignity of great eminence in Sweden, and not an empty title, to be taken up without any consequence.

The beginning of the king's administration did not raise any favourable ideas of him; he seemed to be more impatient after rule, than deserving of it. He had indeed no dangerous passion; but there was nothing to be observed in his conduct, except the transports of youth and obstinacy. He appeared proud and careless of business. Even the ambassadors who resided at his court, took him for a person of a mean capacity, and represented him as such to their masters. The Swedes had entertained the same opinion of him themselves, so that no one as yet knew his real character; he was not even acquainted with it himself, till the storms, which all at once were gathering in the North, furnished him with an opportunity of displaying those great talents which as yet lay concealed.

Three powerful princes taking the advantage of his youth, conspired his ruin almost at the same instant. The first was Frederick IV. King of Denmark, his cousin; the second Augustus, Elector of Saxony,

and the king of Poland : Peter the great, Czar of Muscovy was the third and the most dangerous.

These then were the enemies which were preparing all together to fall upon the infancy of Charles XII.

The whispers of these preparations alarmed the kings council, and they deliberated upon them in his presence ; and some of them were proposing to divert the storm by negotiations. Charles rising from his seat with an air of gravity and resolution, *Gentlemen*, says he, *I am resolved never to enter upon an unjust war, nor put an end to a just one but by the destruction of my enemies. My resolution is fixed. I will go attack the first who shall declare against me, and when I have conquered him, may hope to strike a terror into the rest.* These words astonished all the old counsellors, they looked upon one another without daring to reply, and at last, ashamed to hope less than their king, they received his orders for the war with admiration.

They were still more surprized, when they saw him of a sudden renounce all the most innocent amusements of youth. From the moment he prepared for the war, he entered upon a new course of life, from which he never after departed in one single particular. Full of the idea of Alexander and Caesar, he proposed to immitate those two conquerors in every thing but their vices. He no more admired magnificence, sports and recreations ; he reduced his table to the utmost frugality. He had been fond of gaiety and dress, but was ever after clad like a common soldier. They had suspected him of having entertained a passion for a lady of his court ; but whether the suspicion was just or no, it is certain he renounced all conversation with the women for ever after ; not only through fear of becoming a slave to them, but to give the soldiers an example of his resolution to restrain himself to the severest discipline ; or it may be, through the vanity of being the sole prince who knew how to suppress an inclination so difficult to be conquered, He determi-

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ned also to abstain from wine all the rest of his life; not, as has been pretended, to punish himself for an excess, which, as they say, led him into the commission of some irregularities; nothing is more absolutely false than this vulgar report; he never suffered wine to get the mastery over his reason, but it over-heated his constitution, which was warm enough already; he soon after left off bear too, and confined himself to pure water. Besides, sobriety was a virtue till then unknown in the North, and he was desirous of being a model to the Swedes in every particular.

He began with assuring his brother-in law the duke of Holstein of assistance. Eight thousand men were immediately sent into Pomerania, a province not far from Holstein, to strengthen the duke against the attacks of the Danes. And the duke indeed had need of them. His dominions were already ravished, the castle of Gottorp taken, and the town of Tonningen pressed by a close siege, to which the king of Denmark was come in person, to enjoy a conquest he thought secure. This small spark began to inflame the empire. On one side the Saxon troops of the king of Poland, those of Brandenburg, Wolfembutte, and Hesse Cassel, marched to join the Danes. On the other, the king of Sweden's eight thousand men, the troops of Hanover and Zell, and three dutch regiments went to assist the duke. Whilst the little country of Holstein was thus made the theater of the war, two squadrons, the one from England, and the other from Holland, appeared in the baltick. These two estates were guarantees of the treaty of Altena, which the Danes had broken: They were eager to relieve the oppressed duke, because the interest of their trade was incompatible with the growing power of the king of Denmark. They knew the Dane, if he was once master of the passage of the sound, would be tempted to impose hard laws on the trading nation, should he ever be strong enough to do it with safety. And this reason has long



engaged the English and Dutch, as much as possible to hold the balance even between the princes of the North. They joined themselves to the young king of Sweden, who seemed ready to be crushed by too many enemies, united together against him, and succoured him for the same reasons the others fell upon him, because they thought him incapable of defending himself. In the mean time Charles set out for his first campaign on the 8th of May new style in the year 1700. He left Stockholm, and never after returned thither. An immense body of people attended him as far as Carlskroon, offering up their prayers for him, and bursting into tears of admiration. Before he left Sweden, he established at Stockholm a council of defence, made up of several senators. This commission was to take care of all that regarded the fleet, the troops and fortifications of the country. The body of the Senate was to regulate every thing besides provisionally within the kingdom. Having thus settled order and regularity in his dominions, his mind, now free from every other care, was bent wholly upon the war. His fleet consisted of three and forty vessels, that which carried him, named the king Charles, and the biggest they had ever seen, was a ship of an hundred and twenty guns; count Piper his first minister, general Renschild, and the count de Guiscard, ambassador of France in Sweden embarked with him. He joined the squadrons of the allies. The Danish fleet declined the engagement, and gave the three united fleets the opportunity of drawing so near to Copenhagen, as to throw some bombs into the town.

The king then, as in a sudden transport, taking count Piper and general Renschild, by the hands: *And what said he, if we should lay hold of the opportunity of making a descent, and besiege Copenhagen by land, whilst it is blocked up by sea?* Renschild answered, Sir, the great Gustavus after fifteen years experience would not have made any other proposition. Orders

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were immediately given for five thousand men to embark, who lay upon the coast of Sweden, and were joined to the troops they had on board. The king quitted his vessel, and entered into a lighter frigate; and they dispatched three hundred grenadiers in small shallops towards the shore. Among these shallops were small flat bottomed boats, which carried the fascines, the Chevaux de Frize, and the instruments of the pioniers. Five hundred select men followed after in other shallops. Then came the king's men of war, with two English frigates and two dutch, which were to favour the descent with their cannon.

Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, is situate in the isle of Zealand, in the midst of a beautiful plain, which has the sound on the northwest, and the Baltick on the east, where the king of Sweden then lay. Upon the unexpected movement of the vessels, which threatned a descent, the inhabitants in a consternation at the inactivity of their own fleet, and the motion of the Swedish ships, looked round with terror to see in what place the storm would fall. The fleet of Charles stopped over against Humblebeck within seven miles of Copenhagen. Immediately the Danes drew up their horse to that place. The foot were posted behind thick entrenchments, and what artillery they could get thither was directed against the Swedes.

The king then quitted his frigate, to throw himself into the first shallop, at the head of his guards. The ambassador of France was constantly at his elbow; *Sir*, says the king to him in Latin (for he would never speak French) *you have no difference with the Danes, you shall go no further if you please.* *Sir*, answered the Count de Guiscard in French, *the king my master has ordered me to attend your majesty; I flatter myself you will not this day drive me from your court, which never before appeared so splendid.* As he spoke these words, he gave his hand to the king, who leapt into the shallop, whither Count Piper and the ambassador follow-

ed him. They advanced under cover of the cannon-ball of the vessels, which favoured the descent. The small boats were but about an hundred yards off the shore; Charles, impatient of landing, threw himself from the shallop into the sea, with his sword in his hand; and the water up to his middle. The ministers, the ambassador of France, the officers and soldiers, strait followed his example, and marched to shore amidst a shower of musket shot, which the Danes discharged. The king, who had never in his life before heard a discharge of muskets loaden with ball, asked Major Stuart, who stood next him, *What whistling that was which he had in his ears. It is the noise of the musket ball which they fire upon you,* says the major, *That is right,* says the king, *henceforward it shall be my music.* And that moment the major who explained the noise to him, received a shot in the shoulder; and a lieutenant on the other side of him fell dead at his feet. It is usual for troops that are attacked in their retrenchments to be beaten, because the assailants have generally an impetuosity, which the defenders cannot have; besides, to wait for the enemy in one's lines, is generally a confession of one's own weakness, and the other's advantage. The Danish horse and foot took to their heels after a taint resistance. As soon as the king was master of their retrenchments, he fell on his knees to thank God for the first success of his arms. He immediately caused redoubts to be raised towards the town, and himself marked out the encampment. At the same time he sent back his vessels to Schonen, a part of Sweden not far from Copenhagen, for fresh recruits of nine thousand men. Every thing conspired to assist the vivacity of Charles. The nine thousand men were upon the shore ready to embark, and the next morning a favourable wind brought them to him.

All this passed within sight of the Danish fleet, who durst not venture to interpose. Copenhagen in a fright immediately sent deputies to the king, to entreat him

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not to bombard the town. He received them on horse-back at the head of his regiments of guards, and the deputies fell upon their knees before him. He demanded of the town four hundred thousand rix dollars, with orders to supply his camp with all sorts of provisions, which he promised they should be honestly paid for. They brought him the provisions, because they durst not refuse them, but were in no expectation that the conqueror would vouchsafe to pay for them; and those who brought them were astonished to find that they were paid generously and without delay by the meanest soldier in the army. There had long reigned in the Swedish troops a strict discipline, which contributed not a little to their conquest; and the young king made it still more severe. There was not a soldier that dared to refuse payment for whatever he bought, much less go marauding, or even stir out of the camp. He would not so much as allow his troops after a victory the privilege of stripping the dead, till they had his permission, and easily brought them to the observance of his order. Prayers were constantly said in his camp twice a day, at seven in the morning, and four in the afternoon; and he never failed to be present at them himself, to give his soldiers an example of piety as well as valour. His camp, which was far better governed than Copenhagen, had every thing in abundance; and the country people chose rather to sell their provisions to their enemies the Swedes than to their own countrymen, who did not pay so well for them. And the townsmen were more than once obliged to fetch their provisions from the king of Sweden's camp, which they wanted in their markets.

The king of Denmark was then in Holstein, whither he seemed to have marched only to raise the siege of Tonningen. He saw the Baltick covered with his enemies ships, a young conqueror already master of Zealand, and ready to take possession of the capital. He published a declaration, that whoever would take up

arms against the Swedes should have their liberty. This declaration was of great weight in a country, where all the peasants, and even many of the townsmen were slaves. But Charles XII. was in no fear of an army of slaves. He let the king of Denmark know, that he made war for no other reason but to oblige him to make peace; and that he must either resolve to do justice to the duke of Holstein, or see Copenhagen destroyed, and his kingdom put to fire and sword. The Dane was too fortunate to have to do with a conqueror, who valued himself upon his justice. A congress was appointed to meet in the town of Travendal, on the frontiers of Holstein. The king of Sweden would not suffer the artifice of the ministers to protract the negotiations into any length; he would have the treaty finished with as much rapidity as he made his descent into Zealand. And it was effectually concluded on the 5th August, to the advantage of the duke of Holstein, who was indemnify'd from all the expences of the war, and delivered from oppression. The king of Sweden would accept of nothing for himself, being satisfied with having relieved his ally, and humbled his enemy. Thus Charles XII. at eighteen years old began and ended this war in less than six weeks.

Precisely at the same time the king of Polland laid siege in person to the town of Riga, the capital of Livonia; and the Czar was upon his march on the east at the head of an hundred thousand men. Riga was defended by the old count d' Alberg, a Swedish general, who at the age of fourscore joined all the fire of youth to the experience of sixty campaigns. Count Flemming, since minister of Polland, a great man both in the field and at the council board, and Mr. Patkul, carried on the siege under the king's direction; the one with all the activity proper to his character, and the other with the utmost obstinacy of revenge. But notwithstanding several advantages which the besiegers had gained, the experience of the

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old Count Alberg rendered all their efforts fruitless, and thing of Poland despaired of gaining the town. He last laid hold of an honourable opportunity of raising the siege. Riga was full of merchants goods belonging to the Dutch. The states general ordered the ambassador attending upon king Augustus, to make proper representations of it to him. The king of Poland did not stand in need of much intreaty. He consented to raise the siege, rather than occasion the least damage to his allies, who were not mightily surprised at this excess of complaisance, as they knew the real cause of it.

No month then remained for Charles XII. to do, for the finishing his first campaign, than to march against his rival in glory, Peter Alexiowitz. He was the more enraged against him, as there were still three Muscovite ambassadors at Stockholm, who were ready to swear to the renewing an inviolable peace. He who valued himself upon a severe probity, could not comprehend how a legislator like the Czar could make a jest of what ought to be held so sacred. The young prince, full of honour, did not so much as dream, that there could be different morality for princes and private persons. The emperor of Muscovy published a manifesto, which he had much better have suppressed. He alleged for a reason of the war, that they had not paid him sufficient honours, when he passed *incognito* to Riga; and that they had sold provisions too dear to his ambassadors. These were the griefs, for which he ravished Ingria with an hundred thousand men.

He appeared before Narva at the head of this great army on the first of October, in a season more severe in that climate, than the month of January is at Paris. The Czar, who in such weather would sometimes ride post four hundred leagues to see a mine or canal, spared his troops no more than he spared himself. Besides, he knew that the Swedes, ever since the time of Gustavus Adolphus, would make war in the depth of winter

as well as in summer, and he wanted accustom the Muscovites also to lose all distinction of seasons, and to make them one day at least equal the Swedes. Thus at a time when the frost and snow oblige other nations in temperate climates to a suspension of arms, the Czar Peter laid siege to Narva, within thirty degrees of the Pole, and Charles XII. was upon his march to relieve it.

The Czar was no sooner arrived here the place, than he made haste to put in practice what he had lately learnt abroad in his travels. He drew up his camp, fortified it on all sides, raised redoubts at certain distances, and opened the trench himself. He had given the command of his army to the duke de Croÿ a German, and an able general, but at that time very little assisted by the Muscovite officers. For himself, he had only the rank of a single lieutenant in his own troops. He judged it necessary to give his nobility an example of military obedience, who till then had been undisciplinable, and accustomed to march at the head of ill armed slaves without any experience or order. He had a mind to teach them, that places in the army were to be obtained by services; he began himself with beating a drum, and was raised to an officer's degrees. It is by no means to be wondered at, that the who at Amsterdam turned carpenter to procure himself fleets, should become a Lieutenant at Narva to teach his nation the art of war.

The Muscovites are strong and indefatigable, and, it may be, as courageous as the Swedes; but it requires time to form experienced troops, and discipline to make them invincible. The only good soldiers in the army were thirty thousand Strelitzes, who were in Muscovy what the Janisaries are in Turkey. The rest were Barbarians forced from their forests, and covered over with the skins of wild beasts, some armed with arrows, and others with clubs; few of them had fuses, nor had any of them seen a regular siege; there was

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not one good cannoneer in the whole army. An hundred and fifty cannon, which one would have thought must have soon laid the little town of Narva in ashes, were scarce able to make a breach, whilst the artillery of the town destroyed every moment whole ranks in the trenches. Narva was almost without fortifications, and Count Hoorn who commanded there, had not a thousand regular troops; and yet this immense army was not able to reduce it in ten weeks.

On the 15th of November, the Czar had information that the king of Sweden, having crossed the sea with two hundred transports, was upon his march to relieve Narva. The Swedes were no more than twenty thousand; but the Czar had no advantage except superiority of number. Far therefore from despising his enemy, he employed all the art he had to oppress him; and, not content with an hundred thousand men, he was getting ready another army to oppose him, and check his progress. He had already given orders for near forty thousand recruits, who were coming up from Plescow, with great expedition. He went in person to hasten their march that he might hem in the king between the two armies. Nor was this all; a detachment of thirty thousand men from the camp before Narva, were posted at a league's distance from the town, directly in the king of Sweden's road. Twenty thousand streletses were placed farther off upon the same road, and five thousand others made up an advanced guard; and he must necessarily force his way through the body of all these troops before he could reach the camp, which was fortified with a rampart and double *fosse*. The king of Sweden had landed a Pernaw in the gulf of Riga with about sixteen thousand foot, and a few more than four thousand horse.

From Pernaw he had made a precipitate march as far as Revel, followed by all his horse, and only four thousand of his foot. But he still kept on his march,

without waiting for the rest of his troops; and soon found himself with his eight thousand men only, before the first posts of the enemy. He without hesitation attacked them one after another; without giving them time to learn with how small a number they had to engage. The Muscovites seeing the Swedes come upon them, made no doubt but they had a whole army to encounter with; and the advanced guard of five thousand men immediately fled upon their approach. The twenty thousand beyond them, terrified with the sight of their countrymen, made no resistance; and carried their consternation and confusion among the thirty thousand, who were posted within a league of the camp; and the panic seizing upon them too, they retired to the main body of the army without striking a blow. These three posts were carried in two days and an half; and what upon other occasions would have been reckoned three victories, did not retard the king's march the space of one hour. He appeared then at last with his eight thousand men, wearied with the fatigues of so long a march, before a camp of an hundred thousand Muscovites, with an hundred and fifty pieces of brass cannon in their front; and he scarce allowed them any time for rest, before he gave his orders for the attack without delay.

The signal was *two fusces*, and the word in German, *With the aid of God*. A general officer having represented to him the great hazard of the attempt, *What, says he, do you make any question whether with my eight thousand brave Swedes I shall not rout a hundred thousand Muscovites?* but upon reflection, fearing there was too much ostentation in what he said, he ran after the officer in a moment, *And are not you, says he, of the same opinion? have not I a double advantage over the enemy; the one, that their horse can be of no service to them, and the other, that the place being strait, their great number will only incommode them, and thus in reality I shall be stronger than they?* The offi-

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cer did not think fit to differ from him, and thus they marched against the Muscovites about noon on the 30th of November 1700.

As soon as the cannon of the Swedes had made a breach in the entrenchments, they advanced with their bayonets at the end of their fuses, well loaded with ball, which they furiously discharged upon their enemies. The Muscovites stood their fire for half an hour, without quitting their posts. The king attacked the Czar's quarter, which lay on the other side of the camp, and was in hopes of a rencounter, not knowing that the emperor was in quest of the forty thousand men, who were daily expected. Upon the first discharge of the enemy's shot, the king received a ball in his left shoulder, but it grazed only in a slight manner upon the flesh; his activity even hindred him from perceiving that he was wounded. Presently after his horse was killed under him. A second had his head carried off by a cannon ball. And as he was nimbly mounting a third, *These fellows*, says he, *make me exercise*, and then he went on to engage and give orders with the same presence of mind as before. Within three hours the entrenchments were carried on all sides. The king pursued the right of his enemy as far as the river of Narva, with his left wing, if one might properly call by that name, about four thousand men, who were in pursuit of near fifty thousand. The bridge broke under them as they fled, and the river was in a moment covered with the dead. The rest in despair returned to their camp, without knowing whither they went; and finding certain barracks, they took their posts behind them. There they defended themselves for a while, as not knowing how to make their escape. But at last their generals Dolhoruky, Gollowin, and Fedorowitz, surrendered themselves to the king, and laid their arms at his majesty's feet. And in the instant they were offering them, came up the duke of Croy,

the general of the army, to surrender himself with thirty officers.

Charles received all these prisoners of distinction with as easy a politeness, and as obliging an air, as if he had been to pay them the honours of an entertainment in his own court. He put only the general officers under a guard; all the subaltern officers and soldiers were disarmed and conducted to the river of Narva, where they were furnished with boats to carry them over, and return them back to their own homes. In the mean time night came on, and the right wing of the Muscovites still continued fighting. The Swedes had not lost fifteen hundred men; eighteen thousand Muscovites had been killed in their entrenchments; a great number was drowned; many had passed the river; but still there remained enough in their camp to exterminate the Swedes even to the last man. But it is not the number of the dead, but the terror of those who survive that gives the finishing stroke to victories. The king employed the small remains of the day in seizing upon the enemy's artillery. He posted himself to advantage between their camp and the town, and there slept some hours on the ground, wrapt up in his cloak, expecting to fall at day break upon the left wing of the enemy, which was not yet entirely routed. But at two o'clock in the morning, general Wade, who commanded that wing, having heard of the gracious reception the king had given to the other generals, and how he had sent home all the subaltern officers and soldiers, desired he would grant him the same favour. The conqueror made answer, *That he should have it, if he would draw near at the head of his troops, and lay down his arms and colours at his feet.* The general appeared soon after with his Muscovites, to the number of about thirty thousand. They marched, soldiers and officers, with their heads uncovered, across less than seven thousand Swedes. The soldiers as they passed before him, threw down their fuses



and swords upon the ground, and the officers presented him with their ensigns and colours. He caused the whole multitude to cross the river, without retaining a single soldier prisoner. If he had put them under the guard, the number of the prisoners would at least have been five times greater than that of the conquerors.

He then entered victorious into Narva, attended by the duke of Croy and the other general officers of the Muscovites. He ordered their swords to be restored to them; and being informed, they wanted money, and that the tradesmen of Narva refused to trust them, he sent the duke of Croy a thousand ducats, and every Muscovite officer five hundred, who could never sufficiently admire the civility of their treatment, of which they could not form to themselves the least idea. Immediately a relation of the victory was drawn up at Narva to be sent to Stockholm and the allies of Sweden; but the king cut off with his own hand whatever was reported too much to his own advantage, or to the detriment of the Czar. His modesty could not hinder the striking at Stockholm several medals to perpetuate the memory of these events. Among the rest they struck one which represented him on the one side standing on a pedestal, to which were chained a Muscovite, a Dane, and a Polander; and on the reverse an Hercules armed with his club, treading upon a Cerberus, with this inscription TRES UNO, CONTUDIT ICTU.

Among the prisoners taken at the battle of Narva there was one, who was a great instance of the revolutions of fortune. He was the eldest son and heir to the king of Georgia. They call him the Czarasis, a name which signifies prince or son of Czar amongst all the Tartars, as well as in Muscovy; for the word Czar signifies king among the ancient Scythians from whom all these people are descended, and is by no means derived from the Caesars of Rome, so long unknown to these Barbarians. His father Mitelleksi

Czar, who was master of the most beautiful part of the country, situate between the mountains of Arrarat and the eastern coast of the Black sea, had been driven from his kingdom by his own subjects in 1688. and chose rather to throw himself into the arms of the emperor of Muscovy than apply to the Turks. This king's son at nineteen years of age, attended upon Peter the great, in his expedition against the Swedes, and was taken fighting by some Findland soldiers, who had already stripped him, and were upon the point of killing him. Count Renschild rescued him from their hands, supplied him with cloaths, and presented him to his master. Charles sent him to Stockholm, where the unfortunate prince died some few years after. Upon his taking leave, the king could not avoid making aloud, in the hearing of his officers, a natural reflection upon the strange fate of an Asiatic prince born at the foot of mount Caucasus, who was going to live a prisoner among the snows of Sweden. *It is, says he, as if I was to be one day prisoner among the Crim Tartars:* These words at that time made no impression, but were afterwards but too much thought on, when the event had confirmed the prediction.

The Czar was advancing by long marches with an army of forty thousand Russians, in expectation of surrounding his enemy on all sides. In the mid-way he had intelligence of the battle of Narva, and the dispersion of his whole camp. He judged it not convenient with his forty thousand, raw and undisciplined to engage with a conqueror, who had lately destroyed an hundred thousand entrenched in their camp. He returned back from whence he came, still pursuing his resolution of disciplining his troops, at the same time that he civilized his subjects. *I know, says he, that the Swedes will long beat us, but in time they will learn us to beat them.* Muscov, his capital, was in the utmost terror and desolation at the news of this defeat. And so great was the pride and ignorance of the people, that they could not be persuaded but that they

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they had been conquered by more than human power, and that the Swedes had been victorious by the force of magic. This opinion was general, that public prayers were ordered to be put up to saint Nicolas the patron of Muscovy, upon this occasion. The form was too singular to be here omitted. It runs thus.

*O thou, who art our perpetual comforter in all our adversities, great St. Nicholas, infinitely powerful, by what sin have we offended thee in our sacrifices, genuflections, and thanksgivings, that thou hast thus forsaken us? We have implored thy assistance against these terrible, insolent, enraged, dreadful, insuperable destroyers, when like lions and bears, who have lost their young, they have fallen upon us, terrified, wounded, and slain by thousands us who are thy people. As it is impossible this should have happened without diabolical influence and enchantment, we beseech thee, O great St. Nicholas, to be our champion and standard-bearer, to deliver us from this troop of forcerers, and drive them far off from our coasts, with the recompence that is due unto them.*

Whilst the Muscovites were thus complaining of their defeat to St. Nicholas, Charles XII. returned thanks to God, and prepared himself for fresh victories.

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## BOOK II.

**T**HE king of Poland with reason expected, that his enemy, already victorious over the Danes and the Muscovites, would come next to vent his fury on him. He entered into a league more strict than ever with the Czar, and the two princes agreed upon an interview, the better to contrive their measures. They met at Birsen, a small town in Lithuania, without any of these formalities, which serve only to re-

tard business, and were neither agreeable to their situation nor their humour. They passed fifteen days together in the enjoyment of several extravagant pleasures; for the Czar, amidst his cares for the reformation of his kingdom, could never correct in himself his dangerous inclination to debauchery.

Count Piper, the king of Sweden's principal minister had the first information of the interview intended between the emperor of Muscovy and the king of Poland. He advised his master to oppose to their measures a little of that policy which he had hitherto too much disregarded. Charles XII. listened to him and for the first time gave consent to the use of intriguing, a practice so frequent in other courts. There was in the Swedish troops a young Scots gentleman, who was one of those that leave their country, where they are very poor, in a lucky season, and are to be met with in all the armies of Europe. He spoke the German tongue extremely well, and could easily accommodate himself to whatever part he should undertake. Him therefore they chose to be a spy upon the conferences of the two kings. He applied himself to the colonel of the regiment of Saxon horse, who were to serve as guards to the Czar during the interview. He passed for a gentleman of Brandenbourg, and his address and certain well-placed sums, easily procured him a lieutenancy in the regiment. When he came to Birsen he artfully insinuated himself into the familiarity of the secretaries of the ministers, and was made a party in all their pleasures; and whether it was that he took the advantage of their indiscretion over a bottle, or that he gained them by presents, but he certainly drew from them all the secrets of their masters, and made haste to give an account of them to Charles XII.

The king of Poland had engaged to furnish the Czar with fifty thousand German troops, which they were to hire of several princes, and the Czar was to pay for. And he on the other hand was to send fifty thou-



said Muscovites into Poland, to be trained up to war, and promised to pay king Augustus three millions of \*rixdollers within the space of two years. This treaty, if it had been executed, might have proved fatal to the king of Sweden. It was a ready and certain way to make the Muscovites good soldiers; and perhaps it was forging chains for one part of Europe.

Charles XII. used his utmost endeavours to prevent the king of Poland from reaping the benefit of this treaty. After he had passed the winter at Narva, he appeared in Livonia near that very town of Riga, which king Augustus had so unsuccessfully besieged. The Saxon troops were posted along the river Duna, which is very broad in that place, and Charles was to dispute the passage as he lay on the other side the river. The Saxons were not commanded by their prince, who then lay sick, but were headed by Ferdinand Duke of Courland, one of the bravest princes in the North, and Marechal Stenau, an officer of reputation. The King of Sweden had alone formed the plan of the passage, he was about to attempt. He caused great boats to be made after a new manner whose sides were far higher than ordinary, and could be lifted up or let down like a draw-bridge. When lifted up they covered the troops they carried; and when let down, they served as a bridge to land by. He made use likewise of another stratagem. Having observed that the wind blew directly from the North, where he lay, to the South, where his enemies were incamped, he set fire to a large heap of wet straw, which spreading a thick smoke over the river, hindered the Saxons from seeing his troops, or judging what he was about to do. By means of this cloud he sent out barks loaden with more of the same smoking straw, so that the cloud encreasing, and being driven by the wind directly in the face of his enemies, it made it impossible for them to know whether he

† \* *A rixdoller is worth about as much as a French crown of three livres.*

was upon his passage or not. He alone conducted the execution of his scheme, and being got into the midst of the river, *Well*, says he to General Renschild, *the Duna will be as good to us as the sea of Copenhagen; take my word for it, General, we shall beat them.* He got to the other side in a quarter of an hour, and was vexed to find that three people had leapt ashore before him. He immediately landed his cannon, and drew up his troops before the enemy, who were quite blinded with smog, and could not make any opposition but by a few random shot. And the wind having dispersed the mist, the Saxons saw the king of Sweden already upon his march against them.

Mareschal Stenau lost not a moment, but at the first appearance of the Swedes fell furiously upon them with the best part of his horse. The violent shock of that troop falling upon the Swedes in the instant they were forming their battalions, threw them into disorder. They gave way, were broken, and pursued even into the river. The king of Sweden rallied them in a moment in the midst of the water, with as much ease, as if he had been making a review. The soldiers then marching more close than before, beat back Mareschal Stenau, and advanced into the plain. The duke of Courland finding his troops in a consternation, made them retire very dexterously into a dry place, flanked with a morass, and a wood where his artillery lay. The advantage of the ground, and the time he had given the Saxons to recover from their first surprize, restored them to their courage. Charles immediately fell upon them, having with him fifteen thousand men, and the duke of Courland about twelve thousand. The battle was rough and bloody; the duke had two horses killed under him, and thrice penetrated into the midst of the king's guard; but being at last beat off his horse with a blow from a musket, his army fell into confusion, and disputed the victory no longer. His cuirassiers carried

him off with great difficulty, all over bruised and half dead, from the thickest of the fight, and from under the horses heels, which trampled on him.

The king of Sweden upon this victory makes haste to Mittau, the capital of Courland, and takes it. All the towns in the duchy surrender to him at discretion; it was rather a journey than a conquest. He passed without delay into Lithuania, and conquered wherever he came. And he found a pleasant satisfaction, as he owned himself, when he entred the town of Birsen in triumph, where the king of Poland and the Czar had plotted his destruction but a few months before.

It was in this place that he laid the design of de-throning the king of Poland by the hands of the Poles themselves. As he was one day at table wholly taken up with the thoughts of this enterprize, and observing his usual sobriety, in a profound silence, appearing, as it were, buried in the greatness of his conceptions; a German colonel, who waited upon him, said loud enough to be heard, that the meals which the Czar and the king of Poland had made in the same place were something different from those of his majesty. Yes, says the king rising, *and I shall the more easily spoil their digestion.*

The usual guard of Poland is an army which ought always to subsist at the expence of the republic. It is made up of two bodies independent of each other under two different grand generals. The first body is that of Poland, and should consist of six and thirty thousand men; the second to the number of twelve thousand is that of Lithuania. The two grand generals are independent of each other; and though they be nominated by the king, they never give an account of their actions to any but the republic, and have a supreme authority over their troops. The colonels are absolute masters of their regiments, and it belongs to them to procure them sustenance as

they can, and pay them. But as they are seldom paid themselves, they lay waste the country, and ruin the husbandmen to satisfy their own greediness, and that of their soldiers. The Polish lords appear in these armies with more magnificence than in their towns, and their tents are better furnished than their houses. The horse which makes up two thirds of the army, is almost all composed of gentlemen, and is remarkable for the gracefulness of the riders, the beauty of the horses, and the richness of the accoutrements and harness.

Their Gens d' Armes especially, which they distinguish into Honflarts and pancernes, march always attended by several valets, who lead their horses, which have ornamented bridles with plates of silver and silver nails, embroidered saddles, saddle bows and stirrups gilt, and sometimes made of massy silver, with large housings trailing after the Turkish manner, whose magnificence the Poles strive to immitate as much as they can.

But how gorgeous soever the cavalry might appear, the foot were as wretched and ragged, ill cloathed and ill armed, without proper furniture or any thing uniform; and yet these foot who resemble the vagabond Tartars, support hunger and cold, fatigues and all the weights of war, with incredible resolution.

One may still observe in the Polish soldiers the character of the ancient Sarmatae their ancestors, as little discipline, the same fury in the assault, the same readiness to run away and return to the battle, and the same cruel disposition to slaughter, when they are conquerors.

The king of Poland at first flattered himself that in his necessity these two armies would fight for him, that the Polish Pospolite would arm at his orders, and that all these forces joined to the Saxons his subjects and the Muscovites his allies, would make up



a body, before which the smaller number of the Swedes would not venture to appear. But he saw himself almost on a sudden deprived of these succours by the very care he had taken to have them all together.

Accustomed in his hereditary dominions to absolute power, he too readily supposed that he could govern in Poland as in Saxony. The beginning of his reign raised malecontents. His first proceedings provoked the party which had opposed his election, and alienated almost all the rest. The Poles murmured to see their towns filled with Saxon garrisons, and their frontiers with Muscovite troops. The nation far more jealous of maintaining their own liberty, than concerned in disturbing their neighbours, did not look upon king Augustus's war with Sweden, and the invasion of Livonia, as an enterprize advantageous to the republic. It is not an easy matter to hinder a free nation from discerning their true interests. The Poles perceiving, that if this war undertaken without their consent should prove unsuccessful, their country lying open on all sides, would become a prey to the king of Sweden; and if it should succeed, they should be subdued by their own king, who being then master of Livonia, as well as Saxony, would enslave Poland, as it lies between those two countries, which are filled with fortified places. In this alternative, either of becoming slaves to the king whom they had elected, or of being ravished by Charles XII. who was justly incensed, they only raised an outcry against the war, which they judged to be rather declared against themselves, than against Sweden; and they looked upon the Saxons and Muscovites as the instruments of their chains. Upon the king of Sweden's defeating all that had opposed his passage, and advancing with a victorious army into the heart of Lithuania, they clamoured loud against their sovereign, and with so much the more freedom, because he was unfortunate.

Lithuania was then divided into two parties, that of the princes Sapieba, and that of Oginsky. These two factions had begun from private quarrels, and degenerated into a civil war. The king of Sweden drew over to his interest the princes Sapieba; and Oginsky, being but badly assisted by the Saxons, found his party almost extinguished. The Lithuanian army, which these troubles and want of money had reduced to a small number, was in part dispersed by the conqueror. The few who held out for the king of Poland, were separated into small bodies of wandering troops, which over ran the country, and subsisted by spoil. So that Augustus beheld nothing in Lithuania, but the weakness of his own party, the hatred of his subjects, and the army of the enemy conducted by a young prince, incensed, victorious, and implacable.

There was indeed an army in Poland, but instead of six and thirty thousand men, the number prescribed by the laws, it consisted but of eighteen thousand. And it was not only ill paid and ill-armed, but the generals were undetermined what course they should take.

The king's best refuge was to order the nobility to follow him; but he durst not expose himself to a refusal, which would have too much discovered his weakness, and consequently increased it.

In this state of trouble and uncertainty, all the Palatinates of the kingdom demanded a diet of the king; in like manner as in England in times of difficulty, all the bodies of the state present addresses to the king, to desire him to call a parliament. Augustus stood more in need of an army than a diet, where the actions of kings are examined. He was obliged however to call one, that he might not exasperate the nation beyond a possibility of reconciliation. A diet therefore was appointed to meet at Warsaw on the second of December 1701. And he soon perceived that Charles XII. had at least as much power in the assembly as himself. Those who held for

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the Sapieba, the Lubomirsky and their friends, the Palatine Leclinsky treasurer of the crown, and above all, the partizans of the Princes Sobiesky, were all secretly attached to the king of Sweden.

The most considerable enemy the king of Poland had, was Cardinal Radjousky, archbishop of Gnesna, primate of the kingdom, and president of the diets. He was a man full of artifice and reserve in his conduct; entirely governed by an ambitious woman, whom the Swedes called Madame la Cardinale, who never ceased to push him on to intrigue and faction. The primate's talent lay chiefly in making his advantage of the conjectures which fell in his way, without endeavouring to give rise to them. He would appear unresolved when he was most absolutely determined in his projects, seeking always to gain his ends by ways which seemed most opposite to them. King John Sobiesky, the predecessor of Augustus, had formerly made him bishop of Warmelent, and vice-chancellor of the kingdom. And Radjousky, whilst a private bishop, obtained the cardinals hat by the favour of the same prince. This dignity soon opened him the way to the primacy; and this uniting in his person whatever is apt to impose upon others, he was in a condition to intrigue with impunity.

Upon the death of John he used his utmost endeavours to place prince James Sobiesky upon the throne; but the torrent of hatred they bore to the father, though so great a man as he was, set aside the son. The cardinal primate then joined with the Abbe de Polignac, ambassador of France, to give the crown to the prince of Conti, who in reality was elected, but the money and troops of Saxony got the better of his eloquence. He at last suffered himself to be drawn into the party which crowned the elector of Saxony, and waited with impatience for an opportunity to sow division between the nation and the new king.

The victories of Charles XII. protector of prince

James Sobiesky, the civil war of Lithuania, the general disaffection of all mens minds to king Augustus gave the cardinal hopes that the time was now come when he might be able to send back Augustus into Saxony, and open to the son of king John the way to the throne. This prince, before, the innocent object of the Poles hate, was now become their idol from the time that king Augustus grew out of favour; but he durst not indulge himself in the thoughts of so great a revolution; and yet the cardinal had insensibly laid the foundations of it.

He at first seemed desirous of reconciling the king with the republic: he sent circular letters dictated in appearance by the spirit of concord and charity, usual and noted snares, but such as never fail to entrap: he wrote a pathetic letter to the king of Sweden, conjuring him in the name of him, whom all Christians equally adore, to give peace to Polland, and her king. Charles XII. answered the cardinal's intentions, more than his words. In the mean time he remained in the great duchy of Lithuania with his victorious army, declaring that he would not disturb the diet; that he made war against Augustus and the Saxons, and not against Poland; and that far from designing any thing against the republic, he came to rescue it from oppression. These letters and these answers were for the public. The emissaries which went and came continually from the cardinal to Count Piper, and the private assemblies held at the prelates house, where the springs that moved the diet. They proposed to send an embassy to Charles XII. and required with one consent of the king, that he should bring no more Muscovites upon their frontiers, and that he should send back the Saxon troops.

The bad fortune of Augustus had already done what the diet demanded of him. The league secretly concluded with the Muscovites at Birsen was become as insignificant, as at first it had appeared for-

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midable. He was far from being able to send the Czar the fifty thousand Germans he had promised to raise in the empire. The Czar himself, a dangerous enemy to Poland, was at that time not very eager to assist with all his forces a divided kingdom, from whence he was in hopes of reaping some spoils. He contented himself with sending twenty thousand Muscovites into Lithuania, who did more mischief there than the Swedes, flying continually before the conqueror, and ravaging the lands of the Poles, till at last being pursued by the Swedish generals and finding nothing more to pillage, they returned by shoals to their own country. As for the scattered remains of the Saxons army beaten at Riga, king Augustus sent them to winter and recruit in Saxony; that this sacrifice, however involuntary, might soften the rage of the incensed Poles.

The war was then changed into intrigues, and the diet divided into almost as many factions as there were Palatines. One day the interest of king Augustus prevailed, and the next were prescribed. Every body cried out for liberty and justice, but no body knew what it was to be just or free. The time was spent in cabbaling in secret, and haranguing in public. The diet neither knew what they would, nor what they should, do. Great companies seldom agree upon proper counsels in times of civil broils, because the bold men in such assemblies are generally factious, and the men of probity timorous. The diet broke up in disorder on the 17th of February 1702, after three months of cabbaling and irresolution. The senators, who are the Palatines and the bishops, remained at Warsaw. The senate of Poland have a right to make laws provisionally, which the diets seldom disannul. This body being not so numerous, and used to business, was far less tumultuous, and came to a determination more quickly.

They agreed to send the embassy to the king of Sweden proposed in the diet, that the *Polpolite* should

mount their horses, and be ready upon all events. They made several regulations to appease the troubles in Lithuania, and still more to diminish the king's authority, tho' they had less reason to be afraid of it, than that of Charles.

Augustus chose rather to receive hard laws from his conqueror than his subjects. He determined to ask peace of the king of Sweden, and would have concluded a private treaty with him. But he was obliged to conceal this step from the senate, whom he looked upon as an enemy still more untractable. As the affair was delicate, he entrusted it wholly to the Countess of Konismar, a Swedish lady of great birth, to whom he was then attached. This Lady, who was so famous in the world for her wit and beauty, was more capable than any minister whatever to give success to a negotiation. Besides, as she had an estate in Charles XIIth's dominions, and had lived long in his court, she had a plausible pretence of waiting upon him. She came then to the Swedish camp in Lithuania, and straight applied herself to Count Piper, who too lightly promised her an audience of his master. The countess, among the perfections which rendered her one of the most agreeable persons in Europe, had a singular talent of speaking the languages of several countries, which she had never seen, and with as much propriety as if she had been born in them. She would sometimes amuse herself with writing French verses, which might easily have been mistaken for the composition of a person brought up at Versailles. She made some for Charles XII. which ought not to be forgotten in his history. She introduced the fabulous gods, commending his different virtues; and the peace concluded thus, which (being rendered into English) is,

*The hero's acts, while other gods proclaim,  
And praise, and promise him immortal fame;  
Silent sit Bacchus, and the queen of love.*

All her wit and charms were lost upon such a man as the king of Sweden, and he constantly refused to see her. But as he frequently rode out to take the air, she resolved to speak to him upon the road. And accordingly meeting him one day in a narrow road, she alighted out of her coach, as soon as she saw him. The king made her a low bow without speaking one word to her, turned the bridle of his horse, and rode back in an instant. So that the countess of Konismar gained no other advantage from her journey, but the satisfaction of believing that the king of Sweden feared no body but her.

The king of Poland was therefore obliged to throw himself into the arms of the senate. He made them two proposals by the palatine of Mariembourg; the one that they should leave to him the disposition of the army of the republic, whom he would pay two quarters advance out of his own revenue; and the other, that they should allow him to bring twelve thousand Saxons back into Poland. The cardinal primate gave an answer as severe, as the answer of the king of Sweden. He told the palatine of Mariembourg in the name of the assembly. *That they were resolved to send an embassy to Charles XII. that their business now was to reconcile the king with Poland and Sweden; that it would be of no service to pay an army, which would not fight for him, without orders from the republic; and for the Saxons, he would advise him to bring none into Poland.*

The king in this extremity was desirous of preserving at least the appearance of the royal authority. He sent one of his chamberlains to Charles, to know of him, where and how his Swedish majesty would receive the embassy of the king his master and of the republic. They had unhappily neglected to demand a pass port for his chamberlain to the Swedes. And the king of Sweden imprisoned him, instead of giving him audience, and said that he expected to receive

an embassy from the republic, and not from king Augustus.

Charles then leaving garrisons behind him in some towns of Lithuania, advanced beyond Grodno, a place famous in Europe for the diets that are held there, but ill built and worse fortified.

At some miles from Grodno he met the embassy of the republic, which consisted of five senators. The Waiwode Galecky, and count Tarlo who since died in France, were appointed to deliver it. The king gave them audience in his tent, with a pomp which he always disdained, but then thought necessary. A lieutenant general with an hundred Drabans on horseback, who are the guards of the king of Sweden, went to meet the ambassadors; they lighted off their horses within fifty foot of the royal tent, and were conducted between two lines of guards under arms to a great antichamber. A major general introduced them from thence into a very large chamber, where the ceiling, floors, and walls, were all covered with Persian tapestry. The king received them upon a throne. He rose and took off his hat upon their first bowing; and then the king and the ambassadors being covered, the Waiwode spoke first, and count Tarlo after him. Their discourses were full of caution and obscurity; they did not once pronounce the name of the king of Poland, as they were determined neither to speak in his favour, nor openly to complain of him, but only left him to guess at what they thought not proper to explain. Charles treated each ambassador in private with friendship and confidence. But when he came to give his answer to the republic which sent them, and which did not enter in his measures with a submission so ready as he expected, he told them by count Piper, that he would give an answer at Warsaw.

The same day he marched towards that town. This march was preceded by a manifesto, which the cardinal and his party spread over Poland in eight



days. By this writing Charles invited all the Poles to join their revenge with his, and pretended to shew that their interests and his were the same. They were notwithstanding very different; but the main was supported by a great party, by the disorder of the senate, and the approach of the conqueror, made very strong impressions. They were obliged to own Charles for their protector, since he was resolved to be so, and it was well for them, that he contented himself with that title.

The senators who opposed Augustus, published this writing aloud even before his face, and the few who adhered to him, kept silence. At last when they heard that Charles was advancing by long marches, they all prepared in confusion to depart; the cardinal left Warsaw one of the first; and the major part followed hastily; some fled to their own country seats waiting to see how things would terminate, and others to arm their friends. There remained with the king only the ambassadors of the emperor and the Czar, the Popes Nuncio, and some few bishops and palatines, who were attached to his fortune, he was forced to fly, and nothing yet had been decided in his favour. Before his departure he made haste to hold a council with the small number of senators, which still represented the senate. But how zealous soever they were for his service, they were still Poles, and had all conceived so great an aversion to the Saxon troops, that they durst not allow him the liberty of bringing above six thousand men from thence for his defence; and they farther voted, that these six thousand men should be commanded by the grand general of Poland, and immediately sent home after the conclusion of a peace. — As to the armies of the republic, they left the disposition of them to him.

Upon this resolution of the council, the king left Warsaw, being too weak to oppose the enemy and little satisfied with the conduct of his own party. He straight published his orders for assembling the Poles.

polite, and armies which were scarce any thing but a bare name. There was nothing to be hoped for out of Lithuania, where the Swedes were posted. And the towns of Poland reduced to a small number of troops, wanted arms, provisions, and good-will. The greatest part of the nobility were intimidated, unresolved, or ill-disposed, and confined themselves to their own houses: their king in vain, though authorized by the laws of the state, gave orders under the pain of death to every gentleman in the country to appear on horse-back and follow him. It was now become a dispute, whether they owed him obedience. His chief dependance was upon the troops of his electorate, where the form of government, being intirely absolute, left him under no apprehensions of being disobeyed. He had already privately given orders for twelve thousand Saxons, who were upon their march with all possible speed. He farther recalled the eight thousand he had promised to the emperor to assist him in his wars against France, and which in the necessity he was reduced to, he was obliged to withdraw. This introduction of so many Saxons into Poland, was a sure means of alienating all men's affections; as it was a violation also of the law made by his own party which allowed him but six thousand: but he knew very well, that if he was conqueror, they durst not complain; and if he was conquered, they would never forgive his having introduced even six thousand. Whilst these soldiers were marching up in troops, whilst he was flying from palatinate to palatinate to assemble the nobility that adhered to him, the king of Sweden at last arrived before Warsaw, on the fifth of May 1702. The gates were opened to him upon the first summons. He sent away the Polish garrison, dismissed the city guard, every where posted guards of his own, ordered the inhabitants to bring in their arms, and content with having disarmed them, and not willing to exasperate them, he demanded no more of them than a contribution of an hundred thousand

livres. King Augustus was then getting together his forces at Cracow, and was much surprised to see the cardinal primate one of the company. That man, whose heart burnt within him to finish the work he had begun, pretended to keep up the decency of his character to the last, and to dethrone his king with all the respectful behaviour of a good subject. He told him that the king of Sweden appeared disposed to a reasonable accommodation, and humbly begged leave that he might attend him. King Augustus granted him what he could not refuse, that is, the liberty of doing him a mischief.

The cardinal primate, thus covering the baseness of his conduct, by the addition of treachery, made haste to visit the king of Sweden, before whom he had never yet ventured to present himself. He saw his Majesty at Praag, not far from Warsaw, but without the ceremonies, which had been used towards the ambassadors of the republic. He found the conqueror clad in a coat of coarse blue cloath, with brass buttons gilt, jact boots, and buff-skin gloves that reached up to his elbows, in a room without hangings, in company with the duke of Holstein his brother-in-law, count Piper his first minister, and several general officers. The king advanced some steps to meet the cardinal, and they had a conference together standing, of about a quarter of an hour, which Charles put an end to by saying aloud, *I will never give the Poles peace, till they have elected another king.* The cardinal, who waited for this declaring, immediately signified it to all the palatines, assuring them he was extremely concerned at it, and at the same time laying before them the necessity of complying with the conqueror.

Upon this news the king of Poland saw plainly, that he must either lose his crown or preserve it by arms; and he used his utmost efforts to succeed in that great decision. All his Saxon troops were arrived from the frontiers of Saxony. The nobility of the palatine of

Cracow, where he still remained, came in a body to offer him their services. He in person exhorted every one of these gentlemen to remember the oaths they had taken, and they assured him that they would spill the last drop of their blood in his defence. Fortified with these succours, and the troops which were called the army of the crown, he went for the first time to seek in person the king of Sweden; and he was not long before he found him, for he was already marching against him towards Cracow.

The two kings met on the 19th of July 1702. in a large plain near Clissau, between Warsaw and Cracow. Augustus had near four and twenty thousand men, and Charles XII. not above twelve thousand. The battle began with the playing of the artillery. Upon the first volley which was discharged by the Saxons, the duke of Holstein who commanded the Swedish horse, a young prince of great courage and virtue, received a cannon-ball in the reins. The king enquired if he was dead, and was told that he was; he made no answer, but the tears fell from his eyes; and then covering his face for a moment with his hands, on a sudden he spurred his horse with fury, and rushed into the thick-est of the enemy, at the head of his guard.

The king of Poland did all that could be expected from a prince who was fighting for his crown. He thrice led up his troops in person to the charge; but the ascendant of Charles XII. carried it, and gained a compleat victory. The enemy's camp, colours, and artillery, And Augustus' war chest, were left to him. He made no stay upon the field of battle, but marched strait to Cracow, pursuing the king of Poland, who fled before him.

The citizens of Cracow were bold enough to shut their gates upon the conqueror. He caused them to be burst open, and took the castle by assault. His soldiers, the only men in the world who could abstain from pillage after a victory, did not offer the least ill treatment to any one citizen; but the king made them pay suffi-

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ciently for the rashness of their resistance, by raising upon them excessive contributions.

He departed from Cracow in the full resolution of pursuing Augustus without intermission: but within some miles from the city his horse fell under him, and broke his thigh. They were obliged to carry him back to Cracow, where he was confined to his bed for six weeks in the hands of his surgeons. This accident gave Augustus leisure to breathe a little. He caused it immediately to be spread throughout Poland and Germany, that Charles XII. was killed by his fall. This false report, which was credited for some time, filled all mens minds with astonishment and uncertainty. In this small interval he assembles all the orders of the kingdom at Mariembourg, and then at Lublin, who had before been called together to Sendomir.

In the mean time Charles XII. recovered of his wound, and overturned all before him. Always fixt in his resolution of forcing the Poles themselves to dethrone their king, by the intrigues of the Cardinal primate, he caused an assembly to be called together at Warsaw to oppose that of Lublin. His generals represented to him that the affair might thus be protracted to a tedious length, and at length vanish in delays; that during this time the Muscovites were daily engaging with the troops he had left behind in Livonia and Ingria, and that the event was not always favourable to the Swedes, and that his presence there in all probability would very soon become necessary. Charles, who was as steady in the execution of his projects, as he was brisk in his actions, answered, *though I were to stay here fifty years, I would not leave the place till I had dethroned the king of Poland.*

Having augmented his victorious troops with six thousand horse and eight thousand foot, which he received from Sweden, he marched against the remains of the Saxon army he had beaten at Clissau, which had gained time to rally and recruit, whilst his fall from his horse had confined him to his bed. This army

shunned his approach, and retired towards Prussia on the north-west of Warsaw. The river Bugh lay between him and his enemies, Charles swam over it at the head of his horse, whilst the foot went to seek a ford somewhat higher. On May 1. 1703. he came up with the Saxons at a place called Pultusk. They were commanded by general Stenau to the number of about ten thousand. The king of Sweden in his precipitate march had brought no more along with him, being confident that a less number would have sufficed. The terror of his arms was so great, that one half of the Saxon army ran away at his approach, without staying for the battle. General Stenau stood firm for a while with two regiments, but the moment after, he was drawn along in the general flight of his army, which was dispersed before it was conquered. The Swedes did not take a thousand prisoners, nor kill six hundred men, having more difficulty in pursuing than defeating them.

Augustus who had nothing left him but the scattered remains of the Saxons beaten on all sides, retired in all haste to Thorn, a town of royal Prussia, situate upon the Weiffel, and under the protection of Poland. Charles immediately prepared to besiege it. The king of Poland not thinking himself secure, withdrew into Saxony. In the mean time Charles, who made nothing of so many brisk marches, swimming of rivers, and hurrying along with his foot mounted behind his horse, was not able to bring up his cannon before Thorn; but was obliged to wait till it was sent him from Sweden by sea:

Whilst he was waiting for it, he took up his quarters within some miles of the town, and would often advance too near the ramparts, to view it. The plain dress he always wore was of greater service to him than he had ever imagined in these dangerous walks. It hindered him from being taken notice of, and pointed out by the enemy, as a person to be fired at. One day having approached very near with one of his generals named Lieven, who was dressed in scarlet trimmed with gold, and fearing lest the general should be

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perceived, he straight ordered him to walk behind him, moved by that magnanimity so natural to him, which even hindered him from reflecting that he exposed his own life to a manifest danger to save that of his subject.

Lieven discerning his error too late in having put on a remarkable habit, which exposed also those that were with him, and fearing equally for the king in whatever place he was, hesitated a while whether he ought to obey him; in the moment while this contest lasted, the king takes him by the arm, puts himself before him, and hides him; at the same instant a cannon ball, which came in flank, struck the general dead upon that very spot which the king had scarce quitted. The death of his man, killed directly in his stead, and because he had a mind to save him, contributed not a little to confirm him in the notion he ever held of absolute predestination, and made him believe, that his fate, which protected him in so singular a manner, reserved him for the execution of greater things.

Every thing succeeded with him, and his negotiations and his arms were equally fortunate. He was in a manner present throughout all Poland; for his grand Marechal Renschild was in the heart of those dominions with a great body of the army. Near thirty thousand Swedes under different generals, dispersed towards the north and the east upon the frontiers of Muscovy, withstood the efforts of the whole empire of Russia; and Charles was in the west at the other end of Poland, at the head of the best part of his troops.

The king of Denmark, tied down by the treaty of Travendal, which his weakness hindered him from breaking continued silent. The elector of Brandenburg who had acquired the title of king of Prussia, without any increase of power, durst not express his disgust at seeing the king of Sweden so near his dominions. His grandfather had been deprived of the

best part of Pomerania by Gustavus Adolphus: and he had no security for the rest, but the moderation of Charles. Farther towards the south-west between the rivers of Elbe and Weser lay the duchy of Bremen, the last territory of the ancient conquests of the Swedes, filled with strong garrisons, which opened to the conqueror the gates of Saxony and the empire. Thus from the German ocean almost to the mouth of the Boristhenes, which make the breadth of Europe, and to the gates of Muscov, all was in consternation, and every moment expecting an entire revolution. His vessels were masters of the Baltic, and employed in transporting prisoners from Poland into his own country. Sweden alone was calm in the midst of these great emotions, tasting the sweets of a profound peace, and enjoying the glory of her king, without bearing the weight of it; since his victorious troops were paid and maintained at the expence of the conquered.

In this general silence of the North before the arms of Charles XII. the town of Dantzic ventured to disoblige him. Fourteen frigates and forty transport vessels were bringing the king a supply of six thousand men, with cannon and ammunition, to finish the siege of Thorn. These succours must necessarily pass up the Weisell. At the mouth of this river lies Dantzic, a rich and free town, enjoying with Elbing and Thorn the same privileges in Poland, as the imperial towns have in Germany. Its liberty had been attacked by turns, by the Danes, the Swedes, and some German princes, and was preserved only by the jealousy which these powers had of each other. Count Steinbock, one of the Swedish generals, assembled the magistrates in the king's name, demanded a passage for the troops, and offered to buy powder of them and some ammunition. The magistrates, by an usual imprudence in those who treat with their superiors in strength, durst neither absolutely refuse, nor expressly grant what he demanded. General Stein-

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bock made them give by force more than he had asked; and farther exacted from the town a contribution of an hundred thousand crowns by way of recompence for their imprudent denial. At last the recruits, the cannon and ammunition being arrived before Thorn: the siege was begun on the 22d of September.

Rovel, governor of the place, defended it a month with a garrison of five thousand men. And then it was forced to surrender at discretion. The garrison were made prisoners of war, and sent into Sweden. Rovel was presented to the king unarmed. His majesty, who never lost an opportunity of doing honour to merit in his enemies, gave him a sword with his own hand, made him a considerable present in money, and sent him away upon his parole. The honour the town of Thorn had, in having formerly produced Copernicus the founder of the true system of the world, had no influence upon a conqueror, too little conversant in such matters, and who knew how to reward nought else but valour. This poor petty town was condemned to pay forty thousand crowns; an excessive contribution for such a place!

Elbing a town built upon an arm of the Weiffel, founded by the Teutonic knights, and also annexed to Poland, did not make a proper advantage for the Dantzikers mistake, but hesitated too long about giving passage to the Swedish troops, and was more severely punished than Dantzic. Charles entred there in person on the 13th of December at the head of four thousand men armed with bayonets at the end of their muskets. The inhabitants in a fright threw themselves upon their knees in the streets, and begged for mercy. He took from them all their arms, lodged his soldiers in their houses, and then having called the magistrates together, obliged them to raise that very day a contribution of two hundred and sixty thousand crowns. There were in the town two hundred pieces of cannon, and four hundred thousand weight of gun-powder, upon which he seized. The

gaining a victory would not have brought him so many advantages. All these successes were forerunners to the dethroning of king Augustus.

The cardinal had scarce taken an oath to his king, that he would attempt nothing against him, before he went to the assembly at Warsaw, but still under the pretence of peace. He was attended by three thousand soldiers raised upon his own estate, but upon coming thither talked of nothing but concord and obedience. At last he threw off the mask, and on the 14th of February 1704, declared in the name of the assembly, *Augustus, elector of Saxony, incapable of wearing the crown of Poland.* They then pronounced with a common voice, that the throne was vacant. The session of that day was not yet ended, when a courier from the king of Sweden brings a letter from his majesty to the assembly. The cardinal opens the letter, which contained an order in form of a request, *to elect prince James Sobiesky for their king.* They were disposed to obey with joy, and fixed the day of the election. The prince was then at Breslau in Silesia, waiting with impatience for the crown, which his father had wore. He was complimented upon it, and some flatterers had even already given him the title of majesty, in speaking to him. As he was one day hunting at some leagues off from Breslau with prince Constantine one of his brothers, thirty Saxon horsemen, sent privately by king Augustus, break out of a sudden upon them from a neighbouring wood, surround the two princes, and carry them off without resistance. Fresh horses stood ready at a distance, upon which they were immediately carried to Lipsic, and close confined. This step at once broke all the measures of Charles, the cardinal, and the assembly at Warsaw.

Fortune, which makes sport with crowned heads, threw king Augustus almost at the same time upon the point of being taken himself. He was at dinner within three leagues of Cracow, relying upon an ad-

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vanced guard polled at some distance, when general Renchild came suddenly upon him, after having carried off the guard. The king of Poland had but just time to get on horseback with ten others. General Renchild pursued him four days, ready to seize upon him every moment. The king fled to Sendomier, and the Swedish general followed him thither; and it was a singular piece of good fortune, that he made his escape.

In the mean time the king's party treated that of the cardinal, and were reciprocally treated by them, as traitors to their country. The army of the crown was divided between the two factions. Augustus forced at last to accept of succours from the Muscovites, repented that he had not applied to them sooner. Sometimes he marched into Saxony, where his forces were exhausted; and sometimes he would return into Poland, where they durst not assist him. On the other side the king of Sweden reigned in Poland calm and victorious; and more absolutely than Augustus had ever done.

Count Piper, who was as much a politician; as his master was a hero, laid hold of the opportunity to advise Charles XII. to take upon himself the crown of Poland. He represented to him how easily he might bring it about with a victorious army, and a powerful party in the heart of a kingdom, which he had already brought under subjection. He tempted him with the title of *defender of the Evangelical religion*, a name which flattered the ambition of Charles. It was easy for him, he said, to do in Poland what Gustavus Vasa had done in Sweden; to introduce Lutheranism, and break the chains of the people, now slaves to the nobility and clergy. Charles gave way to the temptation for a moment; but glory was his idol. He sacrificed his interest to it, and the pleasure he would have had in taking Poland from the pope. He told Count Piper, that he liked better to

give away kingdoms than gain them, and added smiling: *You were made for the minister of an Italian prince.*

Charles still lay near Thorn, in that part of royal Prussia which belongs to Poland; he thence observed all that was transacted at Warsaw, and kept the neighbouring powers in awe. Prince Alexander brother of the two Sobiskys, who were carried off in Silesia, came to demand vengeance of him: The king promised it him the more readily, as he judged it easy, and that he should be thereby revenged himself. But being impatient to give Poland a king, he offered the throne to prince Alexander, which fortune seemed bent to deny to his brother. He did not in the least expect a refusal. But prince Alexander told him, that nothing should ever engage him to make an advantage of his eldest brothers misfortune. The king of Sweden, Count Piper, and his friends, and especially the young palatine of Posnania, Stanislaus Lecinskiy, pressed him to accept of it. But he continued firm in his resolution. The neighbouring princes were astonished at the news, and knew not whom they should admire most; a king of Sweden, who at two and twenty years old gave away the crown of Poland, or prince Alexander, who refused to accept it.

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### BOOK III.

**Y**OUNG Stanislaus Lecinskiy was then deputed by the assembly at Warsaw to give an account to the king of Sweden of several differences which had arose among them since prince James was carried away. Stanislaus had a very engaging aspect, full of bravery and sweetness, with an air of probity and openness, which is doubtless the greatest of all outward advantage, and adds a greater weight to words than



eloquence itself. The discretion with which he spoke of king Augustus, of the assembly, the cardinal primate, and the different interests which divided Poland, made an impression upon Charles XII. He was a prince that understood mankind exceedingly well, and had succeeded in the choice he had made of his generals and ministers. He designedly prolonged the conference, that he might the better sound the genius of the young deputy. And after the audience he said aloud, *That he had not seen a man so fit to reconcile all parties.* He strait made enquiry into the character of the palatine of Lecinsky; and was informed that he was a person of great courage and inured to fatigue; that he lay constantly upon a kind of straw mattresses, requiring no service of his domesticks about his person; that he was of a temperance before unknown to that climate; liberal, and adored by his vassals; and the only nobleman perhaps in Poland, who had any friends, at a time when no regard was paid to any ties but those of interest and faction.

This character, which in many particulars resembled his own, determined him entirely. He advised with no body, but without any cabbaling, or even public deliberation, he said to two of his generals, shewing them *Lecinsky*; *see there is the king whom the Poles shall have.*

His resolution was fixt, and Stanislaus as yet knew nothing of the matter, when the cardinal primate came to wait upon Charles. The prelate was king during the *interregnum*, and was desirous of prolonging his transient authority. Charles asked him whom he thought in Poland deserving of the crown. I know but three, answered the cardinal. The first is the prince Sapieba; but his imperious, cruel and despotick humour will never agree well with a free people. The second is *Lubormisky*, grand general of the crown; but he is too old, and is farther

suspected of loving money too much. The third is the palatine of Posnania, more deserving indeed than the other two, if his want of experience did not render him incapable of governing so capricious a nation. The cardinal thus excluded all whom he proposed and would have them believed unfit to reign whom he had pronounced alone worthy of it. The king of Sweden concluded the conversation by telling him, that Stanislaus Lecinski should be their king.

The cardinal had scarce left the king, before he received a courier from the lady, who was absolute over him. She told him in her letter, that she was resolved to marry her daughter to the son of Lubormisky, and conjured him to employ all his interest with the king to give the crown of Poland to the father. The letter came too late, the cardinal had given impressions of Lubormisky, as he could never efface. He used his utmost address to draw the king of Sweden insensibly into the new interest which he embraced, and strove more especially to divert him from the choice of Stanislaus. But what have you, says the king, to object against him? Sir says the prelate he is too young. The king dryly answered he is much about my age, turned his back upon the prelate, and immediately dispatched Count Hoorn to signify to the assembly at Warsaw, that they must elect a king in five days, and that they must chuse Stanislaus Lecinski. Count Hoorn arrived upon the 7th of July, and fixed the day of the election on the 12th, as if he had ordered the decampment of a battalion. The cardinal primate, disappointed of the fruit of so many intrigues, returned to the assembly, where he left no stone unturned to make the election. wherein he had no share, prove abortive. But the king of Sweden coming himself incognito to Warsaw, he was obliged to be silent. All that the primate could do was to absent himself from the election; he determined to act as neuter, without appearing to

assist or oppose the resolution of the king of Sweden, carrying himself even between Augustus and Stanislaus, and waiting for an opportunity of prejudicing them both.

On Saturday the 12th of July, the day appointed for the election, about three in the afternoon the assembly met at Colo, the place designed for the ceremony, and the bishop of Posnania presided instead of the primate. He came attended with several persons of distinction, and a large body of gentlemen of the party. The king of Sweden mixt with them that he might in secret enjoy the fruits of his power. Count Hoorn and two other general officers, assisted publicly at the solemnity, as ambassadors extraordinary from Charles to the republic. The session lasted till nine in the evening; and the bishop of Posnania put an end to it by declaring in the name of the diet, *Stanislaus elected king of Poland*. Charles XII. was the first in the crowd to cry out *vivat*; they threw up their hats into the air, and the noise of the acclamations quite stifled the cries of the opposers.

The name of king made no alteration in the manners of Stanislaus; it only caused him to turn his thoughts somewhat more towards war. A storm had placed him upon the throne, and another might drive him thence. He had one half of his kingdom yet to conquer, and was to secure himself in the other, and being treated as a sovereign at Warsaw, and a rebel at Sendomir; he prepared, by force of arms, to make himself acknowledged by all the world.

Charles XII. immediately departed from Warsaw to go finish the conquest of Poland. He had fixed the general rendezvous of his army before Leopold, the capital of the great palatinate of Russia, a place considerable in itself, and much more for the riches it contained. It was thought that it would hold out fifteen days, by means of the fortifications which king Augustus had made there. The conqueror sat down before it on September 5. and the next day carried it

by assault ; and all that resisted were put to the sword. The victorious troops who were now masters of the town, did not disband to run after pillage, notwithstanding the report of the treasures which were in Leopold ; but ranged themselves in order of battle in the great square. There the remains of the garrison came to surrender themselves prisoners of war. The king then proclaimed his orders by sound of trumpet, that all the inhabitants who had any effects belonging to king Augustus or his adherents, should bring them in person before night came on, under pain of death. The measures were so well taken, that few ventured to disobey him, and they brought his majesty four hundred chests filled with gold and silver coin, plate and other things of value.

The beginning of Stanislaus's reign was almost the same day made remarkable by a very different event. Some affairs which absolutely required his presence had obliged him to continue at Warsaw. He had with him his mother, his wife, and his two daughters, of which the youngest was then but a year old, and has since been queen of France. The cardinal primate, the bishop of Posenia, and some great men of Poland made up his new court. His guards consisted of six thousand Polanders of the army of the crown, who were lately brought over into his service ; and whose fidelity he had not yet made trial of. General Hoorn, the governor of the town, had not with him besides above fifteen hundred Swedes. They were at Warsaw in perfect tranquillity, and Stanislaus reckoned to depart thence in a few days to go to the conquest of Leopold : when all on a sudden he received information, that a numerous army was drawing near to the town. This was king Augustus, who by a fresh effort, and one of the finest marches that ever general made, having eluded the king of Sweden, was coming up with twenty thousand men, to fall upon Warsaw, and carry off his rival.

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who defended it, were not to be relied on. Augustus had intelligence within the town; and if Stanislaus tarried, he was sure to be undone. He sent his family therefore into Posenania, under the guard of those Polish troops, in whom he could put most confidence. The cardinal primate fled one of the first to the frontiers of Prussia. Several gentlemen took different roads. The new king went directly to Charles XII. learning early to suffer disgrace, and forced to quit his capital within six weeks after he had been there advanced to the sovereignty. The bishop of Posenania, alone could not escape, being confined to Warsaw by a dangerous illness. One part of the six thousand Polanders followed Stanislaus, and another conducted his family. They sent those into Posenania, whose fidelity they would not expose to the temptation of returning into the service of king Augustus. As to general Hoorn, who was governor of Warsaw in the name of the king of Sweden, he took up his residence in the castle with his fifteen hundred Swedes.

Augustus entered the capital as a sovereign incensed and victorious. Every inhabitant was taxed beyond his abilities, and ill treated by the soldiers. The cardinal's palace, and all the houses of the confederate lords, with all their possessions both in town and country, were given up to plunder. Count Hoorn stood the constant fire of the enemy in the castle, wherein he was enclosed; but the place at last being no more able to hold out, he was forced to beat a parley, and remained prisoner of war, with his fifteen hundred Swedes. This was the first advantage that king Augustus gained, in the torrent of his ill fortune, against the victorious arms of his enemy.

Count Hoorn, released upon his parole, came to Leopold, within a small time after Stanislaus. He took the liberty of complaining a little to the king of Sweden, that his majesty had not relieved Warsaw, *Be not under much concern about it, my dear count, (says*

the king) we must let king Augustus do something by way of amusement, or otherwise he would grow tired of having us so long in his neighbourhood; but take my word for it, he shall not be the better for this advantage.

The conqueror, accompanied by king Stanislaus, went in quest of his enemy at the head of the best part of his troops. The Saxon army fled constantly before him. The towns for thirty miles round sent him their keys, and no day passed which was not signalized with some advantages. Successes began to grow too familiar to Charles. He said it was rather hunting than fighting, and complained of not buying a victory.

Augustus committed the care of his army for some time to count Shullemburg, a very able general; and indeed he stood in need of all his experience at the head of an army under such discouragements. He was under more concern to preserve his master's troops, than to conquer; he acted by stratagem, and the two kings with vigour. He marched off unknown to them, seized upon advantageous passages, and sacrificed some horse, to give time to his foot to retire with safety.

After several artifices and countermarches he found himself near Punitz in the palatinate of Posnania, imagining that the king of Sweden and king Stanislaus were above fifty leagues off from him. But coming thither, he learnt that the two kings had marched those fifty leagues in nine days, and were ready to fall upon him with ten or twelve thousand horse. Shullemburg had not a thousand horse, nor above eight thousand foot, and was to keep his ground against a superior army, the name of the king of Sweden, and the natural fears which so many defeats had raised in the Saxons. He was ever of opinion, tho' opposed in it by the German generals, that the foot might stand against the horse in an open campaign, even without the benefit of Chevaux de Frise; and he ventured to make trial of it that day against the

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Victorious horse commanded by the two kings, and the most experienced of the Swedish generals. He posted himself so advantageously, that he could not be surrounded; his first rank bent one knee upon the ground, and was armed with pikes and fuses; the soldiers stood extremely close, and presented to the enemies horse a kind of rampart pointed with pikes and bayonets; the second rank bending a little upon the shoulders of the first, fired over their heads, and the third standing upright, fired at the same time behind the other two. The Swedes fell upon the Saxons with their usual impetuosity, who waited for them unshaken; the discharge of the muskets, the pikes and bayonets startled the horses, and set them a capering instead of advancing. By this means the Swedes made their attack in disorder, and the Saxons defended themselves by keeping their ranks.

If Charles had ordered his horsemen to alight, the army of Shullemburg must have been inevitably destroyed. There was nothing the general was so much afraid of, and he every moment expected that the enemy would have taken that resolution. But neither the king of Sweden, who had so often practised all the stratagems of war, nor any of his generals ever thought of it. This unequal fight of a body of horse against the foot, tho' often interrupted and renewed, lasted three hours. The Swedes lost more horses than men. Shullemburg at last gave way, but his troops were not broken. He drew them up into an oblong battalion, and, though he had received five wounds in the engagement, he retired in good order in this form about midnight to the small town of Gurau, within three leagues of the field of battle. And he scarce began to breathe in that place, before the two kings appeared suddenly at his heels.

Beyond Gurau, towards the river Oder, lay a thick wood, through which the Saxon general led his fa-

tinged army. The Swedes without pausing pursued him through the thickets of the wood, making their way with difficulty through places which were scarce passible by people on foot; and the Saxons had not crossed the wood above five hours before the Swedish horse. On the other side the wood runs the river Parts; at the foot of a village named Rutsen. Shullemburg had sent before in all haste to get the boats together, and carried his troops across the river, which were already half lost. Charles was come to one side of the river by that time Shullemburg had got to the other. No general ever retreated with so much art, nor did ever conqueror so briskly pursue his enemy. The reputation of Shullemburg depended upon his escaping from the king of Sweden, and the king thought his glory concerned in taking Shullemburg and the rest of his army, he lost no time, but swam his horse cross the river. And thus the Saxons were enclosed between the river Parts, and the great river Oder, which has its source in Silesia, and is in this place very deep and rapid.

The loss of Shullemburg appeared inevitable: he still strove all he could to extricate himself from this extremity by one of those turns of art, which are as valuable as victorious, and the more glorious, because fortune has no share in them. He had not above four thousand men left; a mill, which he filled with granadiers, lay on his right-hand, and a morass on his left; he had a Fosse before him, and his rear guard was upon the banks of the Oder. He had no bridges of boats to throw over the river, but in the evening gave orders for planks. Charles, upon his arrival, immediately attacks the mill in full persuasion that, after he had taken it, the Saxons must either perish in the river, or die sword in hand, or at least surrender themselves prisoners at discretion with their generals. In the mean while the planks were got ready, and the Saxons passed the Oder over them in



the night ; and when Charles had forced the mill, he found no more of the enemy's army. The two kings honoured this retreat with their commendations, and it is spoke of to this day in the empire with admiration. And Charles could not help saying, *Shullemburg has conquered us to day.*

But what was thus glorious to Shullemburg, was of very little service to king Augustus. He once more abandoned Poland to his enemies, withdrew into Saxony, and repaired the fortifications of Dresden with precipitation, already with reason trembling for the capital of his hereditary dominions.

Thus was Poland subdued by Charles XII. His general after his example had beaten several small bodies of Muscovites in Courland, who ever since the great battle of Narva had not shewn themselves but in small companies and made war in those quarters like the vagabond Tartars, who plunder and run away, and appear again but to fly again.

The consecration was solemnized quietly and magnificently October 4, 1705, in the town of Warsaw, notwithstanding the usual custom in Poland of crowning their kings at Cracow. Stanislaus Lecinski and his wife Charlotte Opalinska were consecrated king and queen of Poland by the hands of the Archbishop Leopold, assisted by several other prelates. Charles XII. was present at the ceremony *incognito*, as he had been at the election ; the only fruit he reaped from his conquests.

Whilst he was thus giving a king to the conquered Poles, and Denmark did not presume to trouble him ; whilst the king of Prussia courted his friendship, and Augustus was retired to his hereditary dominion ; the Czar grew every day more formidable. He had feebly assisted Augustus in Poland, but had made powerful diversions in Ingria.

He not only began to be a great soldier himself, but also to teach his Muscovites the art of war : discip-

line was established in his troops: he had great engineers, a serviceable artillery, and a great many good officers; and had learnt the great art of subsisting his armies. Some of his generals both knew how to fight, and if occasion required, to decline it; and besides, he had got together a fleet which was able to make head against the Swedes in the Baltick sea.

Grown strong by all these advantages which were owing to his genius only, and the absence of the king of Sweden, he took Narva by assault, on August 21, 1704. after a regular siege, having prevented its being relieved either by sea or land. As soon as the soldiers were masters of the town, they fell to plunder, and gave themselves up to the most enormous barbarities. The Czar ran from place to place to put a stop to the disorder and massacre. He himself snatched the women out of the hands of the soldiers, who were going to cut their throats, after having ravished them. He was even obliged to kill with his own hands several Muscovites, who did not hearken to his orders. They yet shew the table in the town-house at Narva, upon which he laid his sword, as he entered, and tell the words, which he spoke to the citizens, who flocked thither after him: *It is not says he, with the blood of the inhabitants, that my sword is stained, but with that of the Muscovites, which I have shed to save your lives.*

The Czar aspired farther than the destruction of towns. He was at that time laying the foundations of a city not far from Narva, in the midst of his new conquests. This was the city of Petersburg, which he has since made the seat of his residence, and the center of his trade.

The Czar. in thus forming himself new dominions, held out still an helping hand to king Augustus, who was losing his; he persuaded him by general Patkul, who had lately passed into the service of Muscovy, and was then the Czars ambassador in Saxony

to come to Grodno to confer with him once more upon the unhappy state of his affairs. King Augustus came thither with some troops, attended by General Shullemburg, whose passage over the Oder had rendered him famous in the north, and in whom he placed his last hopes. The Czar arrived, with an hundred thousand men marching after him. The two monarchs formed new schemes of war. King Augustus, as he was dethroned, was no longer afraid of exasperating the Poles by giving up their country to Muscovite troops. It was resolved that the Czar's army should be divided into several bodies to oppose every motion of the king of Sweden. During the time of this interview, king Augustus instituted the order of the White Eagle, a weak expedient to draw over to his interest certain Polish lords, who were more desirous of real advantages, than a mere nominal honour, which becomes ridiculous, when held of a prince, who has nothing left to a king but the title. The conference of the two kings ended in an extraordinary manner. The Czar departed suddenly, and left his troops to his ally, to go and extinguish a rebellion in person, which threatened him in Astracan. He was scarce gone from him, before king Augustus ordered Patkul to be taken up at Dresden. All Europe were in amaze, that, contrary to the laws of nations, and in appearance, to his own interest, he should venture to imprison the ambassador of the only prince who protected him.

The secret of the affair was thus. Patkul proscribed in Sweden for having maintained the privileges of Livonia his country, had been general to king Augustus; but his high and active spirit ill agreeing with the haughty disposition of general Fleming, the king's favourite, more imperious and more active than himself, he had passed into the service of the Czar, whose general he then was and ambassador to Augustus. He was a man of great discernment, and had discovered that the views of Fleming and the chan-

cellor of Saxony, were to offer peace to the king of Sweden at any rate. He formed immediately a design to prevent them, and to bring about an accommodation betwixt the Czar and Sweden. The chancellor countermined his project, and obtained leave to seize upon his person. King Augustus told the Czar, that Patkul was a perfidious wretch, and would betray them both. However, he had no other fault, but that of having served his new master too well; but an unreasonable piece of service is often recompensed with the punishment of treason.

In the mean while the hundred thousand Muscovites on one side, divided into several small bodies, burnt and ravaged the estates of the adherents to Stanislaus; and Shullemburg on the other was advancing with his fresh troops. But the fortune of the Swedes dispersed these two armies in less than two months. Charles XII. and Stanislaus fell upon the separate bodies of the Muscovites, one after another; so briskly, that one Muscovite general was beaten before he knew of the defeat of his companion.

No obstacle could put a stop to the progress of the conqueror. If he found a river in his way betwixt him and the enemy, Charles and his Swedes would swim their horses over it. One party of Swedes took the baggage of Augustus in which were two hundred thousand crowns of silver coin; Stanislaus made a seizure of eight hundred thousand ducats belonging to prince Menzico the general of the Muscovites. Charles at the head of his horse would often march thirty leagues in four and twenty hours, every soldier leading another horse in his hand to mount, when his own was weary. The Muscovites, terrified and reduced to a small number, fled in disorder beyond the Boristhenes.

Whilst Charles was thus driving the Muscovites before him into the heart of Lithuania, Shullemburg at last repassed the Oder, and came at the head of twenty thousand men to give battle to the grand



## CHARLES XII. B. III.

Mareschal Renschild, who was looked upon as the best general Charles XII. had, and was called the Parmenio of the Alexander of the North. These two famous generals, who seemed to share in the fate of their masters, met near Punitz in a place called Fravenstad, a territory already fatal to the troops of Augustus. Renschild had no more than thirteen battalions, and two and twenty squadrons, which all together made about ten thousand men: and Shullemburgh had twice as many. It is to be observed, that he had in his army between six and seven thousand Muscovites, which had long been disciplined in Saxony, and were looked upon as experienced soldiers, who joined the German discipline to the Russian fierceness. The battle of Fravenstad was fought on February 12, 1706. But this very general Shullemburgh, who with four thousand men had in a manner eluded the fortune of the king of Sweden, sunk under that of general Renschild. The engagement lasted not a quarter of an hour, the Saxons did not resist a moment, and the Muscovites threw down their arms upon the first appearance of the Swedes; the terror was so sudden, and the disorder so great, that the conquerors found upon the field of battle seven thousand fuses all charged, which they had thrown away without firing. No defeat was ever quicker, more complete, and more shameful; and yet no general had ever made a finer disposition than Shullemburgh that day, by the confession of all the Saxons and Swedish officers, who learnt by the consequence how little human prudence is mistress of events.

Among the prisoners there was found an entire regiment of Frenchmen; these wretches had been taken prisoners by the troops of Saxony in 1704, at the famous battle of Hochsted, so fatal to the grandeur of Lewis XIV. They had since enlisted themselves into the service of king Augustus, who had formed them into a regiment of dragoons, had given the command of them to a Frenchman of the family of Joyeuse.

The colonel was killed upon the first, or rather the only charge of the Swedes: and the entire regiment were made prisoners of war. From that day these Frenchmen desired that they might be allowed to serve Charles XII. and were received in his service by a singular fate, which reserved them to change again their conqueror and master.

As to the Muscovites they begged for life upon their knees; but Renschild ordered them to be inhumanly massacred in cold blood above six hours after the battle, to revenge on them the violences of their countrymen, and disencumber himself of a number of prisoners he knew not what to do with.

But though the troops of Charles XII. lived under so severe a discipline, that they plundered not the towns which were carried by assault, before they had leave; that they even plundered in a regular manner, and left upon the first signal, and the Swedes to this day boast of the discipline they observed in Saxony: yet the Saxons complain of most terrible ravages committed by them; contradictions which it would be impossible to reconcile, if we did not consider that men are apt to look upon the same objects with different views. It can scarce be conceived but that the conquerors must at some times have transgressed the rules of decency; and the conquered should censure the slightest damages, as the most shocking injuries. One day, as the king was riding out near Lipsic, a Saxon peasant threw himself at his feet to ask justice of him against a grenadier, who had just taken from him what he had designed for his family's dinner. The king ordered the soldier to be brought before him, *And is it true*, says he, with a stern countenance, *that you have robbed this man?* Sir, says the soldier, *I have not done him so much mischief, as your majesty has done his master; you have taken a kingdom from him, and I have only taken a turkey from this fellow.* The king gave the poor man ten ducats with his own hand, and pardoned the soldier for the bold-

ness of his reply, saying, *Remember, friend, if I have taken a kingdom from king Augustus, I have taken nothing for myself.*

King Augustus wandring in Poland, and deprived at once both of his kingdom and electorate, at last wrote a letter with his own hand to Charles XII. to ask a peace. This letter he secretly sent by baron Imhof and Mons. Finsten, referendary of the privy council; his two plenipotentiaries came by night to Charles XII's camp, and had a private audience. The king read the letter, and, *Gentlemen*, says he to the plenipotentiaries, *I will give you my answer in a moment.* He strait retired into his cabinet, and wrote as follows :

**I** *Consent to give peace upon the following conditions, in which it must not be expected that I shall make the least alteration :*

**I.** *That king Augustus renounce for ever the crown of Poland; that he acknowledge Stanislaus, as lawful king, and that he promise never to remount the throne, not even after the death of Stanislaus.*

**II.** *That he renounce all other treaties, and particularly those he has made with Muscovy.*

**III.** *That he send back with-honour into my camp the prince Sobiesky, and all the prisoners he has been able to take.*

**IV.** *That he deliver into my hands all the deserters, which have entered into his service, and particularly John Patkul; and that all proceedings be stopped against such as have passed from his service into mine.*

He gave this paper to count Piper, charging him to negotiate the rest with the plenipotentiaries of king Augustus.

Whilst this peace was silently negotiating in Saxony, fortune seemed to put king Augustus into a condition of obtaining one more honourable, and of

of treating with his conqueror upon a more equal footing.

Prince Menzicoff, generalissimo of the Muscovite army, brought him into Poland a body of thirty thousand men, at a time when he not only did not desire their assistance any longer, but even feared it.

In this nice circumstance there appeared in view of the army, one of the Swedish generals, named Maderfield, at the head of ten thousand men at Calish, near the palatinate of Posnania. Prince Menzicoff pressed king Augustus to give them battle. The king in the utmost perplexity delayed it under several pretexts; for though the enemy had but one third number, there were four thousand Swedes in Maderfield's army, and that was enough to render the event doubtful; and to fall upon the Swedes during the negotiation, and lose the victory, was to ruin him past all redemption. He therefore determined to send a person upon whom he could rely to the general of the enemy, to let him into part of the secret of the peace, and advise him to retreat; but this advice had a very different effect from what was expected. General Maderfield imagined that a snare was laid to intimidate him, and upon the bare force of that imagination he resolved to risk the battle.

The Muscovites that day conquered the Swedes in a pitched battle for the first time. This victory, which king Augustus gained almost against his own inclination, was compleat, and he entered triumphant in the midst of his bad fortune into Warsaw, formerly the capital of this kingdom, but then a dismantled and ruined town, ready to receive any conqueror, and to acknowledge the strongest for king. He was tempted to seize upon this moment of prosperity, and to fall upon the king of Sweden in Saxony with the Muscovite army. But upon recollection, that Charles XII. was at the head of a Swedish army, which till then had been invincible, that the Muscovites would forsake him upon the first information of the treaty



he had begun; that Saxony, his hereditary dominions, already exhausted of men and money, would be equally ravaged by the Muscovites and Swedes; that the empire taken up in a war with France could not assist him; that he should be left without dominions, money, or friends; he judged it better to comply with the terms the king of Sweden should impose upon him. These terms were made more severe, when Charles had information, that king Augustus had fallen upon his troops during the negotiation. His passion and the pleasure of humbling an enemy still more, who had gained an advantage over him, made him the more inflexible upon all the articles of the treaty. Thus the victory of king Augustus served only to render his situation the more unfortunate, a circumstance which in all probability never happened to any one but himself.

He had just sung *Te Deum* at Warsaw, when Finsten, one of his plenipotentiaries arrived from Saxony, with the treaty of peace, which deprived him of his crown. Augustus paused a while, but signed it, and then set out for Saxony, in vain hopes, that his presence might soften the king of Sweden, and that his enemy would perhaps call to mind the ancient alliances of their houses, and the blood which united them.

The two princes first met at Gunterdsdorf in Count Piper's quarters, without any ceremony. Charles XII. was in Jack boots, with a piece of black taffety tied round his neck instead of a cravat; his cloths were as usual made of coarse blue cloth, with brass buttons. He had a long sword by his side, which had served him in the battle of Narva, and upon the pommel of which he would often lean. The conversation turned wholly upon this strange kind of dress, and those great boots. Charles XII. told king Augustus, he had not laid them aside for six years, except when he went to sleep. These trifles were the sole discourse, that passed

between two kings, whereof one had taken away the crown from the other. Augustus spoke all the while with an air of complaisance and satisfaction, which princes and great men accustomed to business know how to put on in the midst of the most cruel mortifications. The two kings dined together several times afterwards. Charles always affected to give the right hand to king Augustus; but so far from softening the rigour of his demands, that he made them still harder. He obliged the King Elector, not only to send Stanislaus the jewels and records of the crown, but withal to write him a letter of congratulation upon his accession. And he absolutely insisted upon giving up of general Patkul without delay. Augustus therefore was forced to write his rival the following letter.

SIR and BROTHER,

‘ **A**S I ought to have regard to the requests of the king of Sweden, I cannot avoid congratulating your majesty upon your accession to the crown, tho’ perhaps the advantageous treaty the King of Sweden has lately concluded for your majesty, might have excused me from this correspondence: however, I congratulate your majesty, beseeching God, that your subjects may be more faithful to you than they have been to me, ”

Lipfic. April

AUGUSTUS King.

S. 1707.

STANISLAUS answered,

SIR and BROTHER,

‘ **T**HE correspondence of your majesty is a fresh obligation which I owe to the king of Sweden; I have a just sense of the compliments you make me upon my coming to the crown: and I hope my subjects will have no room to fail of their sedility towards me as I shall observe the laws of the kingdom.”

STANISLAUS king of POLAND.

King Stanislaus came himself to Lipfic, where he

one day met king Augustus ; but the two princes bowed to each other without speaking. This was the height of Charles XIIth's triumph, to see two kings in his court, whereof one had been crowned, and the other dethroned by his arms.

Augustus was further obliged to order all the magistrates under him not to treat him as king of Poland any longer, and to efface the title he renounced, out of the public prayers. He was less concerned about setting the Sobieskies at liberty ; tho' these princes, upon coming out of prison, refused to see him ; but the sacrifice of Patkul was a circumstance of great mortification. The Czar on one side loudly demanded him back as his ambassador, and on the other the king of Sweden made terrible threats, if they refused to give him up to him. Patkul was then shot up in the castle of Konisting in Saxony. King Augustus thought he might find an expedient to satisfy Charles XII. and his own honour at the same time. He sent his guards to deliver up the unhappy prisoner to the Swedish troops ; but sent before a secret order to the governor of Konisting to let him escape. Patkul's ill fortune took place of the care that was taken to save him. The governor knowing him to be very rich, would have had him bought his liberty. But the prisoner relying still upon the law of nations, and informed of the intentions of king Augustus, refused to pay for what he thought he should obtain for nothing. During this interval, the guards appointed to seize upon him arrived, and immediately gave him up to four Swedish officers, who carried him straight to the generals quarters at Alrnstad, where he continued three months tied to a stake with a heavy chain of iron ; and thence he was carried to Casimir.

Charles XII. forgetting that Patkul was the Czar's ambassador ; and considering only that he was born his subject, ordered a council of war to pass sentence upon him with the utmost rigour. He was condemned to be broke alive and quartered. A chaplain came to

let him know, that he was to die, without informing him of the manner of his punishment. Upon the information, this man, who had braved death in so many battles, finding himself alone with a priest, and his courage no longer supported by glory or passion the sources of intrepidity, poured out a flood of tears into the chaplains bosom. He was engaged to a Saxon lady, named, madam D' Enfilken, who had all the advantages of birth, merit and beauty, and whom he had thoughts of marrying much about the same time that he was given up to punishment. He desired the chaplain to wait upon her, to comfort her, and assure her that he died full of the tenderest regards for her. When he was led to the place of punishment, and saw the wheels and stakes prepared for his execution, he fell into convulsions of terror, and threw himself into the arms of the minister, who embraced him, and covered him with his cloak, and wept over him. A Swedish officer then read aloud a paper, which contained the following words.

*This is to declare, that the express order of his Majesty, our most merciful Lord, is, That this man, who is a traitor to his country, be broke upon the wheel and quartered, for the reparation of his crimes, and for an example to others; that every one may take care of treason, and faithfully serve his king. At the words, most merciful lord, Patkul cried out, What mercy? and at those of traitor to his country; Alas, says he, I have served it too well. He received sixteen blows, and endured the longest and most dreadful tortures, that can be imagined. Thus died the unfortunate John Renold Patkul, ambassador and general to the emperor of Muscovy.*

His members were quartered, and remained exposed upon gibbets, till 1713, when Augustus having regained his throne, ordered these testimonies of the necessity he was reduced to at Alranstad to be collected together. They were brought to him in a box to Warsaw, in presence of the French am-

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ambassador. The king of Poland shewing the box to the minister, said simply to him, *See the members of Patkul*, without any addition of blame or complaint, or without any of the persons present venturing to speak upon so tender and so mournful a subject.

Charles behaved in the same manner towards general Fleming, the favourite, and since the first minister of king Augustus. Fleming was born in the Swedish Pomerania; and though from his infancy he had been attached to the Elector of Saxony, Charles looked upon him always as his subject, and had long demanded him to be given up to him. Fleming, when he saw his master in a condition of refusing nothing fled into Prussia, from whence he wrote a letter to king Stanislaus, with whom he had been acquainted in Poland, to beg of him, that he would prevail with the king of Sweden to lay aside his resentments against him. Stanislaus applied in his favour with warmth, and for eight days successively repeated his entreaties, without any effect; at last he almost threw himself at the feet of Charles, who said to him, *My brother, at your request I grant you his life: but remember, you will one day repent of what you have done.* Indeed Fleming did afterwards serve his master against Stanislaus, much beyond what his duty obliged him to.

About the same time one Paikel, a Livonian, and an officer in the Saxon troops, who was taken prisoner in the field, was condemned at Stockholm by a decree of the senate; but his sentence was only to lose his head. This difference of punishment in the same case shewed too much, that Charles, in putting Patkul to so cruel a death, had sought more to revenge himself than to punish him. However, Paikel, after his condemnation, proposed to the senate, to let the king into the secret of making gold, in case he would pardon him. He made the experiment in prison in presence of colonel Hamilton and the magistrates of the town; and, whether it was that he had in reality discovered any useful art, or whether he

had found out one but that of deceiving plausibly; which seems most probable, they carried the gold which was found at the bottom of the crucible to the mint at Stockholm, and made a report so juridically, and which appeared so important, that the queen, grandmother of Charles, ordered the execution to be suspended, till the king being informed of this particularly, should send his orders to Stockholm.

The king made answer, *That he had refused the pardon of a criminal to the intreaties of his friends, and he would never grant that to interest, which he had denied to friendship.* This inflexibility had something in it very heroical in a prince, who otherwise thought the secret possible. When it was told king Augustus, he said, *He did not wonder that the king of Sweden had so much indifference about the philosophers stone; he had found it in Saxony.*

It was proposed in the Czar's council to make retaliation by treating the Swedish officers, who were prisoners at Muscovy, in the same manner. But the Czar would not consent to a barbarity, which would have been attended with such fatal circumstances; there were more Muscovites prisoners in Sweden, than Swedes in Muscovy.

He sought for a more advantageous revenge. The body of his enemy's army lay idle in Saxony. Levenhaup, the king of Sweden's general, who was left in Poland with about twenty thousand men, was not able to guard the passes in a country without forts, and full of factions. Stanislaus was in the camp of Charles XII. The emperor of Muscovy seizes upon this conjuncture, and re-enters Poland with above sixty thousand men; he divides them into several bodies, and marches with a flying camp as far as Leopold, which was not garrisoned by the Swedes.

Poland had then two primates, as well as two kings, the one nominated by Augustus, the other by Stanislaus. The primate, nominated by Augustus, summoned the assembly of Leopold, and drew thither all those

whom this unfortunate prince had abandoned by the peace of Altranstad, with such as the Czars money had brought over to his interest, and it was proposed to elect a new king. So that Poland was upon the point of having three kings at a time, without being able to say which was the true one.

During the conferences of Leopold, the Czar united interest with the emperor of Germany thro' the common fear they had of the king of Sweden, secretly obtained of him a number of German officers. These came daily to make a considerable augmentation in his forces, by bringing with them experience and discipline. He engaged them to his service by great rewards; and for the better encouragement of his own troops, he gave his picture set round with diamonds to all the general officers and colonels, who had fought at the battle of Calish; the lower officers had medals of gold, and every private soldier a medal of silver. These monuments of the victory at Calish were all struck in his new town of Petersburg, where arts and sciences flourished in proportion as he trained up his troops to a sense of emulation and glory.

The confusion, multiplicity of factions, and continual ravages prevailing in Poland, hindered the diet of Leopold from coming to any resolution. The Czar translated it to Lublin. But the change of place did not lessen the disorder and uncertainty, which all mankind were in; and the assembly satisfied themselves with neither owning Augustus, who had abdicated, nor Stanislaus who had been elected against their inclinations; but they were neither sufficiently united, nor resolute enough to name another king.

King Stanislaus set out from Altranstad on the 15th of July 1707. with general Renschild, sixteen Swedish regiments, and abundance of money. to appease all these troubles in Poland, and make himself peaceably owned. He was acknowledged wherever he passed;

the discipline of his troops, which the better exposed the barbarity of the Muscovites, gained him the peoples inclinations; his extreme affability re-united to him almost all the factions, in proportion as it was known; and his money procured him the greatest part of the army of the crown. The Czar fearing he should want provisions in a country, which his troops had laid desolate, retired into Lithuania, where he had appointed the rendezvous of the several branches of his army, and established magazines. This retreat left king Stanislaus in the peaceable possession of almost all Poland.

The only one, who then troubled him in his dominions, was count Siniausky, grand general of the crown, of the nomination of Augustus. He was a person of very great abilities, and as much ambition, and was at the head of a third party. He neither owned Augustus nor Stanislaus; and after having used his utmost efforts to make himself elected, he was contented to be head of a party, as he could not be king. The troops of the crown, who continued under his command, had scarce any other pay, besides the liberty of ravaging their own country with impunity. And all who had suffered from their plunder, or were apprehensive of it, presently submitted to Stanislaus, whose power was daily confirmed.

The king of Sweden was then receiving ambassadors in his camp at Altranstad, from almost all the princes in Christendom. Some desired him to quit the dominions of the empire, and others pressed him to turn his arms against the Emperor; and it was then a current report, that he designed to join with France, in depressing the house of Austria. Amongst these ambassadors, was the famous John duke of Marlborough, sent by Anne queen of Great Britain. This man, who never laid siege to a town which he did not take, nor fought a battle which he did not gain, was at St. James's a perfect courtier, the head of a party in parliament, and in foreign countries



the most able negotiator of his time. He did France as much mischief by his understanding, as by his arms; and Fagel, secretary of the states general, a man of very great merit, has been heard to say, that more than once the states general having resolved to oppose what the duke of Marlborough was to lay before them; the duke came, spoke to them in French, in which language he expressed himself very ill, and brought them all into his sentiments.

In conjunction with prince Eugene, the companion of his victories, and Heinsius the grand pensionary of Holland, he supported all the weight of the enterprises of the allies against France. He knew that Charles was exasperated against the empire and the Emperor; that he was secretly solicited by the French; and that if the conqueror should join himself to Lewis XIV. the allies would be undone.

It is true, that Charles had given his word in 1700, not to intermeddle in the war of Lewis XIV. with the allies, but the duke of Marlborough did not believe, that any prince would be so great a slave to his word, as not to sacrifice it to his grandeur and interest. He therefore set out for the Hague, with a design to sound the intentions of the king of Sweden.

As soon as he was arrived at Lipsic, where Charles then was, he applied himself secretly, not to Count Piper the first minister, but to Baron Goerts, who began to share the king's confidence with Piper. He told Goerts, that the design of the allies was very shortly to propose to the king of Sweden, to be a second time mediator between them and France. He said this, in hopes of discovering by Goerts answer, the king's intentions, and because he chose much rather to have Charles for an arbitrator than an enemy. At last, he had his public audience at Lipsic.

Upon his first address to the king, he told him in French, that he should think himself happy, if he could be taught under his orders, what he yet wanted to know in the art of war. He then had a pri-

vate audience of an hour long, in which the king spoke in German, and the duke in French. The duke, who was never in haste to make propositions, and had learnt by a long course of experience, the art of penetrating into the sentiments of mankind, and finding out the secret connection between their inmost thoughts and their actions, gestures, and discourse, fixed his eyes attentively upon the king, when he spoke to him of war in general. He thought he perceived in his majesty a natural aversion towards France, and observed that he was pleased when he talked of the conquests of the allies. He mentioned the Czar to him, and took notice, that his eyes always kindled at his name, notwithstanding the moderation of the conference; and he farther remark'd that a map of Muscovy lay before him upon the table. He wanted no more to determine him in his judgment, that the real design of the king of Sweden, and his sole ambition, were to dethrone the Czar, as he had already done the K. of Poland. He understood, that he had no other views, by continuing in Saxony, than to impose by that means certain hard laws upon the Emperor of Germany. But he knew that the Emperor would comply with them, and that thus matters would be easily made up. He left Charles XII. to his natural inclination; and being satisfied with having discovered his intentions, he made him no kind of proposal.

The king, who had not as yet experienced ill fortune, or even any interruption of his successes, thought that one year would be sufficient for dethroning the Czar, and that then he might return and raise himself by his own power to the dignity of arbiter of Europe; but he had a mind first to bring down the spirit of the Emperor of Germany.

Count Zober, the Emperor's chamberlain, had spoke very disrespectfully of the king of Sweden, in the presence of the Swedish ambassador at Vienna. The Emperor had made amends, though much against his

will, by banishing the count. But this would not satisfy the king of Sweden; he insisted upon the delivery of count Zober into his hands. The pride of the court of Vienna was obliged to stoop, and give the count to the king, who sent him back, after having kept him sometime a prisoner at Sietin.

The emperor, who was forced to make this and other concessions, absolutely complied with the will of Charles XII. was named Joseph, the eldest son of Leopold, and brother to the wise emperor Charles VI. who succeeded him.

Count Wratislaw, his ambassador with Charles XII. brought the treaty to Leipzig in favour of the Silefians, signed by his master's own hand. Charles then said, he was satisfied, and was the emperor's very good friend. However, he was much disgusted at the opposition he had found from Rome upon every occasion. He looked with the utmost contempt upon the weakness of that court, which being at present an irreconcilable enemy to one half of Europe, is always in distrust of the other, and supports its credit only by its skill in negotiations. In the mean time he meditated revenge. He told count Wratislaw, that the Swedes had formerly conquered Rome, and had not degenerated as Rome had done. And he let the Pope know, that he would one day demand back the effects which queen Christina had left at Rome. One cannot tell how far this young conqueror would have carried his resentments and his arms, if fortune had prospered his designs. Nothing then appeared impossible to him. He had even sent privately several officers into Asia, and as far as Egypt, to take the plan of the towns, and inform him of the strength of those countries. It is certain that if any one could have overturned the empire of the Persians and Turks, and then have passed into Italy, it was Charles XII. He was as young as Alexander, as much a foldier, and as enterprising; but more indefatigable, more robust, and more virtuous; and

the Swedes perhaps exceeded the Macedonians: but such projects, which are looked upon with astonishment, when attended with success, are treated as chimaera's when they want it.

At last, all difficulties being removed, and whatever he had a mind to be executed; after having humbled the emperor, given law in the empire, protected the Lutheran religion in the midst of Roman-catholics, dethroned one king, crowned another, and seen himself the terror of all the princes around him, he prepared for his departure. The pleasures of Saxony, where he had lain idle a full year, had made no alteration in his manner of living. He mounted on horse-back three times a day, rose at four in the morning, dressed himself alone, drank no wine, sat at table but one quarter of an hour, exercised his troops every day, and knew no other pleasure, but that of making Europe tremble.

The Swedes did not yet know, whether their king would lead them; only it was suspected in the army, that he might go to Muscov. Some days before his departure, he ordered the grand mareschal of his household to give him in writing the rout from Lipsic. — He paused a while at that word, and that the mareschal might have no suspicion of his projects he added smiling — to all the capital cities of Europe. The mareschal brought him a list of them all, and at the head of them had affected to put in great letters, *The road from Lipsic to Stockholm*. The generality of the Swedes wished only to return thither; but the king was far from the thought of carrying them back into their own country. *I see, Sir,* says he, *whither you would lead me, but we shall not return to Stockholm so soon.*

The army was already upon their march, and passed near Dresden. Charles was at their head, and riding, according to his custom, about a quarter or half a mile before his guards. They lost sight of him all at once, and some of the officers spurred on

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their horses to see where he was ; but with all the enquiry they could not find him. The whole army took the alarm in a moment. They made a halt, and the generals met together ; and whilst they were in great consternation, they learnt at last from a Saxon, who was passing by, what was become of him.

He had a mind, as he passed so near Dresden, to make a visit to king Augustus. He entered the town on horse-back, attended by three or four general officers, and went directly to alight at the palace. He was got as far as the electors apartment, before it was known that he was in the town. General Fleming having seen the king of Sweden at a distance, had only time to run and inform his master. All that could be done on such an occasion was presented to the idea of the minister, who laid it before Augustus ; but Charles entered the chamber in his boots, before Augustus had time to recover from his surprise. He was then sick, and in a night gown, but dressed himself presently. Charles breakfasted with him as a traveller, which came to take leave of his friend, and then he expressed his desire of viewing the fortifications. During the little time that was taken up in walking round them, a Livonian condemned in Sweden, who served in the troops of Saxony, thought he could never have a more favourable opportunity of obtaining pardon, and begged of king Augustus, to ask it of Charles ; being fully assured, that his majesty could not refuse so slight a request to a prince, from whom he had taken a crown, and in whose power he then was. Augustus was easily prevailed upon to undertake it. He stood at a little distance from the king of Sweden, and was discoursing with Hoord, a Swedish general. *I believe, says he smiling, that your master will not refuse me. You do not know him, replies general Hoord, he will rather refuse you here than any where else.* Augustus, notwithstanding, asked a pardon for the Livonian, of the king, in very pressing terms ; and Charles denied him in

such a manner, that he did not think fit to ask it a second time. After having passed some hours in this odd kind of visit, he embraced king Augustus, and took him leave. Upon his returning to his army, he found all his general officers assembled in a council of war, and asked the reason. General Renschild told him, they had determined to besiege Dresden, in case his majesty had been detained a prisoner. *Right*, says the king, *they durst not, they durst not*. The next morning, upon the news that king Augustus held an extraordinary council at Dresden, *You see*, says Renschild, *they are deliberating upon what they should have done yesterday*.

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#### BOOK IV.

CHARLES at last took leave of Saxony in September 1707, followed by an army of three and forty thousand men, formerly covered with steel, but then shining with gold and silver, and enriched with the spoils of Poland and Saxony. Every soldier carried with him fifty crowns in ready money; all the regiments were complete, and not only so, but in every company there was several supernumeraries, waited for vacant places. Besides this army, count Levenhaup, one of his best generals, waited for him in Poland with twenty thousand men; and he had besides another army of fifteen thousand in Finland; and fresh recruits were coming to him from Sweden. With all these forces it was not doubted but he must dethrone the Czar.

The emperor of Muscovy was then in Lithuania, employed in keeping up the spirits of a party, which king Augustus seemed to have renounced. His troops, divided into several bodies, fled on all sides upon the first report of the king of Sweden's approach. He had himself advised all his generals never to wait for the coming up of this conqueror with unequal force:

The king of Sweden in the midst of his victorious march, received a solemn embassy from the Turks. The ambassador had his audience in count Piper's quarters; for 'twas there always that ceremonies of pomp were performed. He supported the dignity of his master by a magnificent appearance; and the king, who was always worse lodged, worse served, and more plainly clad than the meanest officer in his army, would often say that his palace was Piper's quarters. The Turkish ambassador presented Charles with an hundred Swedish soldiers; who having been taken by the Calmucks, sold in Turkey, and redeemed by the grand Seignior, were sent by him to the king, as the most agreeable present he could make him; not that the Ottoman pride pretended to pay homage to the glory of Charles XII. but because the Sultan, a natural enemy to the Emperors of Muscovy and Germany, was desirous of strength'ning himself against them by the friendship of Sweden, and the alliance of Poland. The ambassador complimented Stanislaus upon his advancement to the crown; and thus he was owned as king in a very little time by Germany, France, England, Spain, and Turkey. There remained only the Pope, who before he acknowledged him, was willing to wait, till time had settled the crown upon his head, which a turn of fortune might strike off.

Charles had scarce given audience to the ambassador of the Ottoman port, before he began his march in search of the Muscovites.

Charles left Stanislaus in Poland with ten thousand Swedes and his new subjects to assist him in the preservation of his kingdom, against his foreign and domestic enemies; for himself, he marched at the head of his horse amidst ice and snow towards Grodno in the month of January 1708,

Charles surmounted all difficulties, advancing still towards the Borysthenes. He met with twenty thousand Muscovites in his way entrenched in a place named

Hollofin, behind a morafs, which could not be come at without paffing a river. Charles did not wait for the affault till the reft of his infantry came up, but threw himfelf into the water at the head of his foot guards, and croffed the river and the morafs, with the water fometimes above his foulders. Whilft he thus marched againft the enemy, he ordered his horfe to pafs round the morafs, and fall upon them in flank. The Mufcovites in amaze, that no barrier could defend them, were at the fame time routed by the king on foot, and by the Swedifh horfe.

The horfe having made their way through the enemy, joined the king in the midft of the battle. He then mounted on horfeback, but fome time after finding a young Swedifh gentleman, named Gullenftierd, whom he very much efteemed, wounded in the field, and unable to march, he obliged him to take his horfe, and continued to command on foot at the head of his infantry. Of all the battles he had ever fought, this in all probability was the moft glorious, that wherein he was expofed to the moft dangers and wherein he fhewed the greateft abilities. The memory of it is preferved by a medal, with this infcription on one fide, *Sylvae, Paludes, aggeres, hoftis victi*; and on the other, *Victrices opeat alium laturus in orbem*.

The Mufcovites thus obliged to fly, repaffed the Boryfthenes, which feparates the dominions of Poland from their own country. Charles loft no time in the purfuit, he croffed that great river after them at Mohilou, the laft town in Poland, which fometimes belongs to the Czar, and fometimes to the Poles, according to the common fate of frontier places.

The Czar thus feeing his empire, in which he was, giving birth to arts and trade, become a prey to war, which in a little time might ruin all his projects, and perhaps take him from his throne, was inclined to a peate, and even ventured fome propofals by a Polifh gentleman, whom he fent to the Swedifh army. Charles XII. who had not been ufed to grant peace to his

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enemies, but in their capitals, only answered, *I will treat with the Czar at Muscov.* When this haughty answer was reported to the Czar, *My brother Charles,* says he, *still affects to act the Alexander; but I flatter myself, he will not find a Darius in me.*

About thirty miles northward from Mohilou, the place where the king crossed the Borysthenes, along the river, and still upon the frontiers of Poland and Muscovy is situate the country of Smolensko, in which lies the great road from Poland to Muscov. This way the Czar retreated, and the king followed by long marches; and so close, that part of the rear guard of the Muscovites was frequently engaged with the dragoons of the Swedish van-guard. The latter had generally the advantage; but they weakened themselves even by conquering in these small skirmishes, which were never decisive, and in which they always lost abundance of men.

On the 22d of September, in this year 1708, the king attacked a body of ten thousand horse, and six thousand Calmouks near Smolensko. The king fell upon them with only six regiments of horse, and four thousand foot; broke their ranks upon the first onset at the head of his Ostrogothick regiment, and forced the enemy to retreat. He advanced upon them through rough and hollow ways, where the Calmouks lay hid; they then appeared again, and threw themselves between the regiment where the king was fighting and the rest of the Swedish army. The Muscovites and Calmouks in an instant surrounded this regiment, and made their way quite up to his majesty. They killed two aid de camps, who fought near his person. The king's horse was slain under him; and as one of his equerries was presenting him with another, both the equerry and horse were struck dead upon the spot. Charles fought on foot, encircled by some of his officers, who immediately flew to relieve him, by surrounding him.

Several of them were taken, wounded or slain, or

carried off to a distance from the king by the multitude that fell upon them, so that only five men were left about him. He was quite spent with fatigue, having killed above a dozen of the enemy with his own hand, without receiving so much as one wound, by that inexpressible good fortune, which till then had ever attended him, and upon which he still relied. At last, colonel Dardoff forced his way through the Calmouks with a single company of his regiment, and came time enough to disengage the king. The rest of the Swedes put the Tartars to the sword; the army recovered its ranks, Charles mounted his horse, and, fatigued as he was, pursued the Muscovites two leagues.

The king appointed the rendezvous near the river Desna. Mazeppa prince of Ukrania promised to meet him there with thirty thousand men, proper ammunition and provisions, and all his treasures, which are immensely large. The Swedish army therefore was ordered to march towards that side of the country, to the great astonishment of all the officers, who knew nothing of the king's treaty with the Cossacks. Charles sent orders to Levenhaupt, to bring up his troops, and provisions with all speed into Ukrania, where he designed to pass the winter; that having secured that country to himself, he might conquer Muscovy the next spring; and in the mean time he advanced towards the river Drefna, which falls into the Boristhenes at Kiou.

The obstacles they had hitherto encountered in their march were trifles to those they met with in this new road. They were obliged to cross a forest full fifty leagues broad, which abounded in marches. General Lagercorn, who marched before with five thousand men and pioneers led the army thirty miles eastward out of the right way; and they had marched four days before the king discovered the mistake. With difficulty they did get into the right road again, but left almost all their artillery and waggons behind, which were either stuck fast, or quite sunk in the mud.

They marched for twelve days in this painful and laborious manner, till they had eat up the little biscuit that was left, and then they arrived quite spent with hunger and weariness upon the banks of the Desna, in the place where Mazeppa had appointed to meet them; but instead of the prince, they found a body of Muscovites advancing towards the other side of the river. The king was very much astonished, but resolved immediately to pass the Desna, and attack the enemy. The banks of the river were so steep, that they were obliged to let the soldiers down with cords; and they crossed it, according to their usual manner, some by swimming, and others on floats hastily made. The body of Muscovites, which arrived at the same time, were not above eight thousand men; so that they made but small resistance, and this obstacle was also surmounted.

Charles advanced farther into this wretched country, uncertain of his road and Mazeppa's fidelity, Mazeppa appeared at last, but rather as a fugitive than a powerful ally. The Muscovites had discovered and prevented his designs. They had fallen upon the Cossacks, and cut them to pieces; his principal friends were taken sword in hand, and thirty of them had been broke upon the wheel. His towns were laid in ashes, his treasures plundered, the provisions he was preparing for the king of Sweden seized; and he was scarce able to escape himself with six thousand men, and some few horses laden with gold and silver. However, he gave the king hopes of supporting him by his intelligences in this unknown country, and the affection of all the Cossacks, who, enraged against the Muscovites, came in troops to the camp, and brought them provisions.

Charles hoped at least that general Levenhaup would come and repair this ill fortune. He was to bring with him about fifteen thousand Swedes, who were more valuable than a hundred thousand Cossacks, with provisions of ammunition and victual. He ar-

rived at last, but almost in the same condition as Mazepa.

He had already passed the Borysthene above Mohilou, and advanced about twenty leagues farther, on the road to Ukraina. He brought the king a convoy of eight thousand waggons, with the money he had raised in Lithuania, and as he was upon his march. Upon coming up towards Lefno, near the place where the rivers of Pronia and Sossa join to disemborge themselves far below into the Borysthene, the Czar appeared at the head of fifty thousand men.

The Swedish general, who had not quite sixteen thousand, resolved not to entrench. Their many victories had inspired the Swedes with so much confidence, that they never enquired after the number of the enemy, but only where they lay. Levenhaup therefore marched against them without hesitation on the seventh of October 1708. in the afternoon. Upon the first onset they killed fifteen hundred Muscovites. The Czar's army fell into confusion, and fled on all sides; and the emperor of Russia was upon the point of seeing himself entirely defeated. He perceived that the safety of his dominions depended upon the action of that day, and that he was utterly undone if Levenhaup joined the king of Sweden with a victorious army.

As soon as he saw his troops begin to fall back, he ran to the rear guard, where the Cossacks and Calmucks were posted; *I charge you, says he, to fire upon every man that runs away, and even to kill me, if I should be so cowardly, as to turn my back.* From thence he turned to the van-guard, and rallied his troops in person, assisted by prince Menzikof, and prince Galiesin. Levenhaup, who had pressing orders to join his master, chose rather to continue on his march than renew the fight, thinking he had done enough to discourage the enemy from pursuing.

At eleven the next morning the Czar attacked him on the entrance upon a morass, and drew out his

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army at length, that he might surround him. The Swedes faced about, and the fight lasted two hours with equal resolution. The Muscovites lost three times as many men, but still kept their ground, and the victory was undecided.

At four in the afternoon general Baver brought the Czar a supply of troops. The battle was then renewed for the third time, with more fury and eagerness than ever, and lasted till night came on. At last numbers carried it. The Swedes were broke, routed, and driven as far as to their baggage. Levenhaup rallied his troops behind his waggons, and though the Swedes were conquered, they did not fly. They were about nine thousand, and not one single man of them ran away; and the general drew them up as easily in order of battle, as though they had never been beaten.

The Czar on the other side passed the night under arms, and commanded his officers under pain of being cashiered, and his soldiers under pain of death not to stir for plunder.

The next morning at day-break, he ordered a fresh assault. Levenhaup had retired to an advantageous ground at some miles distance, after having nailed down part of his cannon, and set fire to his waggons.

The Muscovites came time enough to hinder the whole convoy from being consumed in the flames; they seized upon six thousand waggons, which they saved. The Czar, who was desirous of completing the defeat of the Swedes, sent general Flug <sup>to</sup> fall upon them again the fifth time; and the general offered them again an honourable capitulation, Levenhaup refused it, and the fifth battle was as bloody as any of the former. Of the nine thousand soldiers he had left, he lost one half, and the other remained unbroken. At last night coming on, Levenhaup, after having sustained five battles against fifty thousand men, swam over the Soffa, followed by the six thou-

sand men he had left alive, and the wounded were carried over on floats. The Czar lost above twenty thousand Muscovites in these five engagements, in which he had the glory of conquering the Swedes, and Levenhapp the reputation of disputing the victory for three days, and of retreating without being broken at last. He then came to his master's camp with the honour of having made so good a defence, but bringing with him neither ammunition nor army.

King Stanislaus would have been glad to have joined Charles at the same time, but the Muscovites who had conquered Levenhapp, lay in his way, and Siniawsky employed him enough in Poland.

The king of Sweden thus found himself without provisions or communication with Poland, surrounded with enemies in the midst of a country, where he had scarce any refuge but his courage.

In this extremity, the memorable winter of 1709, which was still more terrible in those frontiers of Europe, than it was in France, carried off part of his army. Charles resolved to brave the seasons, as he had done his enemies, and ventured to make long marches with his troops during the excessive severity of the weather. It was in one of these marches that two thousand of his men were starved to death almost before his eyes. The horsemen had no boots, and the foot were without shoes, and almost without clothes. They were forced to make stockings of the skins of beasts in the best manner they could. They often wanted bread. They were obliged to throw the best part of their cannon into quagmires and rivers, for want of horses to draw them along. So that this once flourishing army was reduced to four and twenty thousand men ready to perish for hunger. They neither received news from Sweden, nor were able to send thither. In this condition one single officer complained. *How, says the king, are you uneasy that you are so far from your wife? if you are a soldier indeed, I will carry you to that distance, that you shall scarce hear from Sweden once in three years.*

A soldier grumbling, ventured to present him, in presence of the whole army, with a piece of bread, that was black and mouldy, made of barley and oats, the only food they then had, nor had they enough of this: the king received the piece of bread without the least emotion, eat it entirely up, and then said coldly to the soldier, *It is not good, but it may be eaten.* This little turn, if any thing may be called little, that serves to increase respect and confidence, contributed more than all the rest to support the Swedish army under extremities, which would have been intolerable under any other general,

The Czar, who was as active as the king of Sweden, after having sent fresh forces into Poland, to the assistance of the confederates, united under general Siniausky against Stanislaus, advanced very soon into Ukraina, in the midst of this severe winter, to oppose the king of Sweden. He continued there with a view of weakening the enemy by small engagements; for by this means he thought the Swedish army must be ruined intirely at last, as it could not be recruited, whilst he was able to draw fresh forces every moment out of his own dominions.

The cold there must have been excessive indeed, since it obliged the two armies to agree upon a suspension of arms. But upon the first of February they began to engage again in the midst of ice and snow.

After several small skirmishes, and some disadvantages, the king's army was reduced in April to 18000 Swedes. Mazeppa alone, the prince of the Cossacks, supplied them with the necessaries of life. Without his assistance, the army must have perished through hunger and misery. The Czar, in this conjuncture, offered conditions to Mazeppa, to draw him again into his service. But the Cossack continued faithful to his new ally, whether it were through fear of the terrible punishment of the wheel, by which he had lost his friends, or whether through a desire of revenge.

Charles with his eighteen thousand Swedes, and

as many Cossacks, had not laid aside the design, or hopes of penetrating as far as Muscov. Towards the end of May he went to lay siege to Pultawa, upon the river Vorsklat, on the borders of Ukrania eastward, about thirteen long leagues from the Borysthene, where the Czar had made a magazine. If the king took it, it would open him the road to Muscov, and in the abundance he should then possess, he could at least wait for the coming up of the succours he still expected from Sweden, Livonia, Pomerania, and Poland. His sole refuge being then in the conquest of Pultawa. He carried on the siege with vigour. Mázepa, who had a correspondence in the town, assured him, he would soon be master of it, and hope began to revive in his army. His soldiers looked upon the taking of Pultawa as the end of all their miseries.

The king perceived, from the beginning of the siege, that he had taught his enemies the art of war. Prince Menzikof, notwithstanding all his precautions, threw fresh troops into the town, and the garrison, by this means amounted to almost ten thousand men.

The king continued the siege with still more warmth, he carried the advanced works, gave two assaults to the body of the place, and took the courtine. The siege was in this condition, when the king, having rode into the river, to take a nearer view of some of the works, received a shot from a carabine, which pierced through his boot, and shattered a bone of his heel. There was not the least alteration observed in his countenance, by which it could be suspected that he was wounded. He continued calmly to give orders, and remained near six hours on horseback afterwards. One of his domesticks at last perceiving that the sole of his boot was bloody, made haste to call the surgeons; and his pain then began to be so sharp, that they were forced to take him off his horse, and carry him into his tent. The surgeons looking upon the wound, observed, that it already began to mortify, and was of opinion, that the leg must be cut off.

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The army was in the utmost consternation; but one of the surgeons named Newman, who was better skilled, and more courageous than the rest, was positive, that by making deep incisions, he could save the king's leg. *Fall to work then presently,* says the king, *cut boldly, fear nothing.* He held the leg himself with both his hands, looking upon the incisions that were made, as though the operation had been performed upon another person.

As they were lying on the dressing, he gave orders for an assault the next morning; but the orders were scarce given, before word was brought him, that the Czar appeared with an army of above seventy thousand men. He was therefore obliged to take another resolution. Charles, wounded, and incapable of acting, saw himself enclosed between the Borysthene and the river which runs to Pultawa, in a desert country, without any places of security or ammunition, and opposed to an army, which had prevented him either from retreating, or being supplied with provisions. In this extremity, he assembled no council of war, as might have been expected; but on the seventh of July at night he sent for Marechal Renchild into his tent, and ordered him, without deliberation, and without uneasiness to prepare to attack the Czar the next morning. Renchild did not dispute his master's will, but went out with a resolution to obey him. At the door of the king's tent he met count Piper, with whom he had long been at variance, as it often happens between the minister and the general. Piper asked him, if any thing new had happened: no, says the general coldly, and passed on to give his orders. As soon as Piper was entered into the tent, *Has Renchild said any thing to you,* says the king to him. Nothing, answers Piper. *Well then,* replies the king, *I tell you, that to morrow we shall give battle.* Count Piper was astonished at so desperate a resolution; but knew well that his master could not be prevailed on to change his opinion; he

only exprest'd his astonishment by his silence, and left the king to sleep till break of day.

'Twas on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1709, that the decisive battle of Pultawa was fought between the two most famous monarchs then in the world, Charles XII. and Peter Alexiowitz. To have a clear idea of this battle, and the place where it was fought, we must imagine Pultawa lying on the north, the camp of the king of Sweden on the south, drawing a little towards the east, his baggage about a mile behind him, and the river of Pultawa on the north of the town, running from east to west.

The Czar had passed the river about a league from Pultawa towards the west, and was beginning to form his camp.

At day break the Swedes appeared out of their trenches with four cannons for their whole artillery; the rest were left in the camp with about three thousand men; and four thousand remained with the baggage. So that the Swedish army, which marched against the enemy, consisted of about five and twenty thousand men, whereof there were not above twelve thousand regular troops.

The generals, Renchild, Field, Levenhaup, Slipenbak, Hoorn, Sparre, Hamilton, the prince of Wirtemberg who was related to the king, and some others, most of whom had seen the battle of Narva, put the subaltern officers in mind of that day; when eight thousand Swedes had destroyed an army of a hundred thousand Muscovites in their entrenchments. The officers said the same thing to the foldiers, and all encouraged one another as they marched.

The king conducted the march, carried in a litter at the head of his foot. A party of horse advanced by his order to attack that of the enemy. The battle began with this engagement at half an hour after four in the morning. The enemy's horse lay westward on the right of the Muscovite camp; prince Menzicof and count Gallowin had placed them at dis-

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tances between redoubts fortified with cannon. General Slipenbak, at the head of the Swedes, fell upon them. All who have served in the Swedish troops know that it was almost impossible to resist the fury of their first shock. The Muscovite squadrons were broken and routed. The Czar himself ran to rally them, and his hat was shot through with a musket ball; Menzikof had three horses killed under him; and the Swedes cried out victory.

Charles did not doubt but the battle was gained; he had dispatched general Creuts about midnight with five thousand horse or dragoons, who were to take the enemy in flank, whilst he attacked them in front; but his misfortune was, that Creuts went out of the way, and did not appear. The Czar, who had thought himself lost, had time to rally his horse. He fell upon the king's cavalry in his turn, which not being supported by Creut's detachment, was broken likewise, and Slipenbak taken prisoner in the engagement. At the same time seventy two cannons from the camp played upon the Swedish horse, and the Russian foot opening from their lines, advanced to attack the Swedish infantry.

The Czar immediately detaches prince Menzikof to post himself between Pultawa and the Swedes; prince Menzikof executed his master's orders with dexterity and readiness; and not only cut off the communication between the Swedish army, and the troops remaining in the camp, before Pultawa, but meeting with a *Corps de reserve* of three thousand men, he surrounded them, and cut them in pieces.

In the mean time the Muscovite foot came out of their lines, and advanced in order into the plain. And on the other side, the Swedish horse rallied within a quarter of a league from the enemy's army. And the king assisted by general Renchild, made a disposition for a general engagement.

He ranged what troops were left him in two lines; his foot were posted in the center, and his horse made

made up the two wings. The Czar disposed his army in the same manner; he had the advantage of numbers, and of seventy two cannon, whilst the Swedes had no more than four, and began to want powder.

The emperor of Muscovy was in the center of his army, having then the title only of major general, and seemed to serve under general Csermetof. But he went as emperor from rank to rank, mounted on a Turkish horse, which was a present from the grand Signior, exhorting the officers and soldiers, and promising every one of them rewards.

Charles did all he could to sit his horse at the head of his troops; but finding the posture too painful, he returned to his litter, holding his sword in one hand, and a pistol in the other.

At nine in the morning the battle was renewed; one of the first discharges of the Muscovite cannon carried off the two horses of the king's litter; he caused two others to be strait put to it, and a second volley broke the litter in pieces, and overturned the king. The troops which fought near him believed him killed. The Swedes in consternation lost ground, and their powder failing, and the enemy's cannon continuing to play upon them, the first line fell back upon the second, and the second fled. in this last action the Swedish army was routed by a single line of ten thousand men of the Muscovites foot; so much were matters changed.

The king, carried upon pikes by four grenadiers, covered with blood, and all over-bruised with his fall, and scarcely able to speak, cried out, *Swedes, Swedes*, anger and grief renewing his strength, he tried to rally some of his regiments. But the Muscovites closely pursued them with their swords, bayonets, and pikes. The prince of Wirtemberg, general Renchild, Hamilton, and Stakelberg, were already taken prisoners, the camp before Pultawa forced, and all in a confusion, which did not admit of any remedy. Count Pi-

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per with all the officers of the chancery had quitted the camp, and neither knew what to do, nor what was become of the king. They ran from one side of the plain to the other. Major Bere offered to lead them to the baggage; but the clouds of dust and smook, which covered the field, and their own confusion, carried them strait to the counterscarp, of the town, where they were taken prisoners by the garrison.

The king would not fly, and could not defend himself. General Poniatosky chanced to be by him that instant; he was a colonel of the Swedish guards of king Stanislaus, and a person of uncommon merit, whom his attachment to the person of Charles had engaged to follow him into Ukrania without any post in the army. He was one, who in all occurrences of his life, and in dangers, where others at most would have only behaved with courage, shewed a command of understanding, which was ever attended with success, he made a sign to a young Swede named Frederick, the king's first valet de chambre, and as intrepid as his master; they take the king under their arms, and assisted by a Drabant who came up to them, mount him on horseback, notwithstanding the excessive pains of his wound. Frederick got up behind his master, and supported him from time to time.

Poniatosky, though he had no command in the army being made a general on this occasion by necessity, drew up five hundred horse near the king's person; some of them Drabants, others officers, others private troopers. His body, re-animated by the misfortune of their prince, made their way through more than ten regiments of Muscovites, and conducted Charles through the midst of the enemy, the space of a league, to the baggage of the Swedish army.

This surprising retreat was of great consequence in such distress, but the king was under a necessity of flying still farther. They found amongst the baggage count Piper's coach, for the king never had one

since he left Stockholm. They put him into it, and made towards the Borystheneſes with all poſſible ſpeed. The king, who from the time he was ſet on horſeback till he came to the baggage, had never ſpoke one ſingle word, then aſked what was become of count Piper. They told him he was taken with all the officers of chancery: *And general Renchild, and the prince of Wintenberg* ? added the king. They are priſoners too, ſays Poniatofky. *Priſoners to Muſcovites!* replies Charles, ſhrugging up his ſhoulders. *Come on then, let us go to the Turks rather.* They did not obſerve however the leaſt alteration in his countenance, and whoever had then ſeen him, and not known his condition, would have never ſuſpected him to have been either conquered or wounded.

Whiſt he was getting off, the Muſcovites ſeized upon his artillery in the camp before Puława, his baggage, and the money he had raiſed for carrying on the war, where they found fix millions in ſpecie, the ſpoils of Poland and Saxony. Near nine thouſand Swedes were killed in the battle, about fix thouſand were taken, three or four thouſand ran away, and were never heard of ſince. There ſtill remained near eighteen thouſand men, comprehending the Coſacks, with the Swedes and Poles who fled towards the Boryſtheneſes, under the direction of general Levenhaup. He marched on one ſide with theſe fugitive troops, whiſt the king took another road, with ſome of his horſe. The coach in which he rode, broke down in his march, and they ſet him again on horſeback. And to finiſh his miſfortune he rambled all night in a wood: there his courage not being able to ſupply any longer his exhausted ſpirits, and the pains of his wounds becoming more inſupportable by fatigue, and his horſe falling under him through exceſſive wearineſs, he reſted himſelf for ſome hours at the foot of a tree, in danger of being ſurpriſed every moment by the conquerors, who ſought for him on all ſides.

At last, on the 9th of July at night, he found himself upon the banks of the Borysthene, and Levenhau just arrived with the remains of his army. The Swedes saw their king again, whom they judged to have been dead, with a joy mixed with sorrow. The enemy drew nigh, and they had no bridge to pass over, nor time to make one, nor powder to defend themselves against the enemy who came upon them, nor provisions to hinder the army from perishing with hunger, who had eat nothing for a whole day: but what gave the Swedes the greatest uneasiness, was the danger of their king. By good fortune, there was still left a sorry calash, which by chance they had brought along with them; this they embarked in a little boat, and the king and general Mazeppa in another. The latter had saved several coffers full of money, but the current being very rapid, and a violent wind beginning to blow, the Cossack threw more than three parts of his treasures into the river, to lighten the boat. Mullern the king's chancellor, and count Poniatosky, who was now more than ever necessary to the king, for his remarkable presence of mind under difficulties, crossed over in other barks with some of the officers. Three hundred troopers of the king's guards, and a very great number of Poles and Cossacks relying upon the goodness of their horses, ventured to pass the river by swimming. Their troop keeping close together resisted the current, and broke the waves; but all who attempted to cross separately a little below were carried away by the stream, and sunk in the river. Of all the foot who tried to pass over, there were not one who got to the other side.

Whilst the rooted part of the army were in this extremity, prince Menzikof came up with ten thousand horse, having each a foot soldier behind him. The carcases of the Swedes that lay dead in the way, of their wounds, fatigue, and hunger, sufficiently

pointed out to prince Menzikof the road which that body of the army had taken. The prince sent a trumpet to the Swedish general, to offer him a capitulation. Four general officers were presently sent by Levenhaup to receive the law of the conqueror. Before that day sixteen thousand soldiers of king Charles would have attacked all the forces of the Russian empire, and have perished to the last man, rather than have surrendered; but after a battle lost, and a flight of two days, not having their eyes any longer upon their prince, who was constrained to fly himself, the strength of every soldier being spent, and their courage no longer supported by any hope, the love of life took place of intrepidity. The whole army were made prisoners of war. Some of the soldiers in despair to fall into the hands of the Muscovites, threw themselves into the Borysthenes; and the rest were made slaves. They all filed off in presence of prince Menzikof, laying their arms at his feet, as thirty thousand Muscovites had done nine years before at the king of Sweden's at Narva. But whereas the king then sent back all the Muscovite prisoners, whom he was not afraid of, the Czar retained all the Swedes that were taken at Poltawa.

Thus the Swedish army, which left Saxony so triumphant, was now no more. One half of them perished by want, and the other half were made slaves, or massacred. Charles XII. had lost, in one day, the fruits of nine years pains, and almost an hundred battles. He fled in a wretched calash, having major general Hoord by his side dangerously wounded. The rest of his troops followed, some on foot, others on horseback, and some in waggons, across a desert, where they found neither huts, tents, men, animals or roads; every thing was wanted there even to water itself. It was then the beginning of July; the country situate in the 47th degree; the dry sand of the desert rendered the heat of the sun more insupportable; the horses fell by the way, and the men were

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ready to die with thirst. Count Poniatosky, who was a little better mounted than the rest, advanced before them into the plain, and having spied a willow, he judged there must be water nigh, and he sought about, till he found the spring. This happy discovery saved the lives of the king of Sweden's little troop. After five days march, he found himself upon the banks of the river Hippanis, now called the Bogh by the barbarians. This river joins the Borysthenes some miles lower, and falls along with it into the black sea.

Beyond the Bogh, toward the south, lies the little town of Ozakou, a frontier of the Turkish empire. The inhabitants seeing a troop of soldiers coming towards them, whose dress and language they were strangers to, refused to carry them over to Ozakou, without an order from Mahomet basha, the governor of the town. The king sent an express to the governor to ask a passage; but the Turk not knowing what to do in a country, where a false step very often costs a man his life, durst take nothing upon himself, without having first the permission of the basha of the province, who resides at Bender in Bessarabia, thirty leagues from Ozakou. The permission came, with orders to pay the king all the honours due to a monarch allied to the Porte, and to furnish him with all necessary provisions. During these delays, the Muscovites having passed the Borysthenes, pursued the king with all possible speed, and if they had come an hour sooner, they must have taken him. He had scarce passed the Bogh in the Turkish boats, before his enemies appeared, to the number of almost six thousand horse; and his majesty had the misfortune of seeing five hundred of his little troop, who had not been able to get over time enough, seized by the Muscovites on the other side the river. The basha of Ozakou asked his pardon by an interpreter for the delays, which had occasioned the taking those five hundred men prisoners, and be-

sought him not to complain of it to the grand Seignior. Charles promised him he would not, but gave him at the same time a severe reprimand, as if he had been speaking to one of his own subjects.

The commander of Bender, who was also serafquier, a title which answers to that of general, and basha of the province, which signifies governor and intendant, sent presently an aga to compliment the king, and offer him a magnificent tent, with provisions, baggage, waggons, and all the conveniencies, officers and attendants requisite to conduct him handsomely to Bender.

## BOOK V.

**A**CHMET III. was at that time emperor of the Turks. He had been placed upon the throne in 1703. in the room of his brother Mustapha, by a revolution like that in England, which transferred the crown from James second to his son-in-law William.

To him the king of Sweden fled for refuge; and he had no sooner set his foot upon the Sultan's territories at Ozakou, than he wrote him the following letter.

To the most high, and most glorious, invincible and august emperor of many empires, king of many kingdoms, head and protector of many nations, may the Almighty bless and prolong your reign.

**T**HIS letter signed with our royal hand, is to acquaint your imperial highness, that having punished with no less success than justice the treacherous breakers of the faith of treaties, and the law of nations; having driven king Augustus out of Poland, of which he was rather the tyrant than the king, and given to the Poles a king of their own nation, who is a friend to your sublime Porte; and having pursued

the Czar flying as far as Pultawa, heaven has permitted our army, tired out with long marches, and in want of every thing, to be overwhelmed by the enemy that were thrice in number, and has suffered this day to be a day of grief and misfortune to us.

Not being in a place to raise new forces, and daining to fall into barbarous and perfidious hands, we are come to seek refuge and assistance in the territories of your imperial highness, that we may be enabled to return to Poland, in order to rejoin our armies, and support the king we have made there.

What we desire is to have you our friend, and be ourselves yours. As a proof of our sincere affection, we represent to you, that if you give the Czar, whose ambition is neither directed by justice, nor honour, nor true courage, time to take the advantage of our disaster, he will fall upon your territories, when you little expect him, as he has invaded our countries; but why do I say when you little expect him? has he not already built forts upon the Tanais and the Palus Maeotis? does he not already threaten you with his fleets?

To prevent this, there can be no way so proper as by a new alliance between your sublime Porte and us, provided we can but return to Poland, and to our own states with your valliant troops, and carry our arms again into the empire of this perfidious Czar, to put a stop to his unjust ambition.

We shall never forget the favours we shall receive from you, and shall value ourselves upon being inviolably,

*your faithful friend,*

At Ozakou,

Charles XII.

July 13. 1709.

Son of Charles XI.

The king suffered this letter to be sent away, tho' it too much injured the character of his enemies, as well as disguised his own. Perhaps after having treated the Czar and king Augustus with great respect in

his victories, his defeat had sowed him; or else he took for Turkish breeding, to rail at those against whom we ask assistance.

Achmet, who had been beforehand with him, by sending a solemn embassy in the time of his victories, made him sensible now of the difference he made between an Emperor of the Turks, and a king of part of Scandinavia, a Christian vanquished and fugitive. He did not answer him till six months after, and then refused to speak out upon the alliance proposed against the Czar.

*This proposal, says the Sultan to him in his letter, requires a deliberate examination, I shall leave it to the wisdom of my great divan. I value your friendship, and grant you mine together with my protection. I have given orders to the bashas of Natolia, and Romelia, to provide a guard to conduct you safely where you think proper. Jussuf the basha serasquier of Bender, will advance you five hundred dollars a day, with all necessary provisions for yourself and your attendants, and horses, that you may live as becomes a king.*

*Given at Constantinople the first day of the month Sheval, the 1121 year of the Hegira.*

From the first moment of king Charles's repairing to the Turkish territories, he had laid the design of turning the Ottoman arms upon his enemies, he already fancied he saw himself at the head of the Turkish forces, reducing Poland again under the yoke, and subduing Muscovy. M. de Neugbaver set out from Ozakou for Constantinople, with the character of king's envoy extraordinary. Count Poniatosky, a person equally capable and resolute, of an engaging and agreeable temper, born with the talent of persuading and pleasing all nations, attended the Swedish embassy, but in a private capacity, in order to sound the dispositions of the Constantinopolitan ministry, without being tied up to the usual forms, and giving too much ground for suspicion: he knew how to gain in a short time the favour of the grand visir, who load-

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ed him with presents; and had the art to convey a letter of the king of Sweden's to the Sultana Valide, mother to the Emperor then upon the throne, who formerly had been ill used by her son, but now began to recover her interest in the seraglio. He entered into a close friendship with one Bru a Frenchman, who had been chancellor to the French embassy. This man was perpetually talking of the king of Sweden's exploits to the chief of the Sultan's eunuchs, who charmed his mistress with repeating them. The Sultana, by a secret inclination with which most women find themselves surprized in favour of extraordinary men, even without having ever seen them, took the king's part openly in the seraglio, she called him by no other name than that of her lion: *And when will you, said she sometimes to the Sultan her son, help my lion to devour this Czar?* she even dispensed with the strict rules of the seraglio, so far as to write several letters with her own hand to Count Poniatosky, in whose custody they still are at the time of my writing this history. One of the shrewdest of those that entered into Poniatosky's designs, was Fonesca a Portuguese physician, fixed at Constantinople, a learned and ingenious person, who joined the knowledge of men to that of his own art, and whose profession procured him access to the Ottoman Porte, and often an intimacy with the visirs.

At length the king of Sweden's party was become so powerful at Constantinople, by Poniatosky's management, that the faction of the Muscovite envoy thought their only refuge was to poison him. Accordingly they prevailed upon one of his domesticks to give him poison in a dish of coffee; but the crime was discovered before it was put in execution. The poison was found in the servant's hands, in a little phial, which they carried to the grand Seignior. The poisoner was tried in full divan, and condemned to the gallies; for the Turkish law never punishes such crimes capitally, as were intended only, but not executed.

The grand visir appeared as eager as the Sultana Valide, to serve the king of Sweden: he told Poniatofky, giving him at the same time a purse of 1000 ducats, *I will take your king in one hand, and a sword in the other, and carry him to Muscow, at the head of 200000 men.*

However the king was conducted to Bender in a pompous manner, thro' the desert that was formerly called the wilderness of the Geta. The Turks took care that nothing should be wanting upon the road to make his journey agreeable.

The king chose to encamp near Bender, rather than lodge in the town. The serasquier Jussuf basha caused a magnificent tent to be pitched for him, and tents also were provided for all the lords of his retinue. Some time after, the king built a house in this place, and his officers did the same after his example: the soldiers also raised barracks; so that the camp, by degrees, became a little town. The king being not yet cured of his wound, was obliged to have a carious bone taken out of his foot; but as soon as he was able to mount a horse, he renewed his usual fatigues, rising always before the sun, tiring three horses a day, and exercising his soldiers; but sometimes he played at chess with general Poniatofky, or Mr. de Grothusen, his treasurer. Those who had a mind to gain his favour, attended him at his horse courses, and were all day long in their boots. One morning going into the house of his chancellor Mullern, who was asleep, he forbid them to awake him, and waited in the anti-chamber, where there was a large fire in the chimney, and near it several pair of shoes that Mullern had sent for from Germany, for his own use. The king threw them all into the fire, and then went away. When the chancellor, upon waking, perceived the smell of the burnt leather, and had enquired into the reason of it: *What a strange king is this,* says he, *that his chancellor must be always booted!*

At Bender he found plenty of every thing about him ; a happiness very rarely attained to by a fugitive prince : for besides provision more than sufficient, and the five hundred crowns a day which he received from the Ottoman munificence, he drew money also from France, and borrowed of the merchants at Constantinople. Part of his money was employed in carrying on intrigues in the seraglio, in purchasing the favour of the visirs, or procuring their ruin. The rest he distributed profusely amongst his officers, and the Janisaries of Bender. Grothusen, his favourite and treasurer, was the dispenser of his liberalities ; a man who, contrary to the custom of persons in that station, was as much pleased with giving as his master. He brought him one day an account of sixty thousand crowns in two lines, 10000 given to the Swedes and Janisaries by the generous orders of his majesty, and the rest spent by myself. *See, says the king, how I like my friends should give in their accounts. Mullern makes me read whole pages for the sum of 10000 livers, but I like Grothusen's stile much better.* One of his old officers, thought to be a little covetous, complained to the king, that he gave all to Grothusen. *I give money,* replies the king, *to none but those who know how to make use of it.*

Thus was Charles XII. employed at Bender, where he waited till an army of Turks should come to his assistance. To dispose the Ottoman Porte to this war, he detached about 800 Poles and Cossacks of his retinue, with orders to pass the Neister, that runs by Bender, and to go and observe what passed upon the frontiers of Poland.

The Muscovite troops dispersed in those quarters fell immediately upon this little company, and pursued them even to the territories of the grand Seignor.

This was what the king of Sweden expected. His ministers and emissaries at the Porte made a great

clamour against this irruption, and excited the Turks to vengeance: but the Czar's money removed all difficulties. Tolstoy, his envoy at Constantinople, gave the grand visir and his creatures part of the six millions that had been found at Pultawa in the king of Sweden's military chest. After such a defence, the divan found the Czar not guilty. And so far were they from talking of making war against him, that they granted such honours and privileges to his envoy, as the Muscovite ministers had never before enjoyed at Constantinople. He was suffered to have a seraglio, that is, a palace, in the quarters of the Franks, and to converse with the foreign ministers. Nay, the Czar thought he had power enough to demand, that general Mazeppa should be delivered up to him, as Charles XII. had caused the unfortunate Patrick to be surrendered into his hands. Chourloullys-Ali basha could no longer refuse any thing to a prince, who backed his demands with millions. Thus, the same grand visir, who before had made a solemn promise to carry the king of Sweden into Muscovy with 200000 men, had the assurance to make a proposal to him of consenting to the sacrifice of general Mazeppa. King Charles was enraged at the question. However, it is not certain how far the visir would have carried the matter, had not Mazeppa, who was then seventy years of age, died just at this juncture. The king's grief and resentment were very much augmented, when he understood that Tolstoy, now become the Czar's ambassador at the Porte, was served in public by the Swedes that had been made slaves at Pultawa, and that these brave soldiers were daily sold in the market at Constantinople. Besides, the Muscovite ambassador declared openly, that the Musselman troops at Bender were placed rather as a guard upon the king, than to do him honour.

King Charles, abandoned by the grand visir, and conquered by the Czar's money in Turkey, as he had been by his arms in Ukrania, found himself de-

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cluded, scorned by the Porte, and, in a manner, a prisoner among the Tartars. His attendants began to despair, himself alone remained firm, and did not shew the least dejection of spirit, no not for a moment. He imagined the Sultan was ignorant of the intrigues of his grand visir, Chourlouly-Ali, and resolved to make him acquainted with them, and Poniatosky understood this bold commission. The grand Seignior went every Friday to the mosque, encompassed with his solacks, a kind of guard whose turbans were set with feathers so high, that they hid the Sultan from the eyes of the people. When any one had a petition to present to the grand Seignior, the way to mix himself among these guards, and hold his petition up in the air. Sometimes the Sultan vouchsafed to take it himself, but more frequently he ordered an aga to take care of it, and afterwards, upon his return from the mosque, caused the petitions to be laid before him. There is no fear of any one's daring to importune him with trifling and unnecessary petitions; for, at Constantinople, they write less in a year, than they do at Paris in a day: much less does any one venture to present petitions against the ministers, to whom for the most part, the Sultan remits them, without reading them. However, Poniatosky had no other way to convey the king of Sweden's complaints to the grand Seignior. He drew up a representation against the grand visir sufficient to ruin him. M. de Feriolle, who was at that time the French ambassador, got it translated into Turkish. A Greek was hired to present it, who mingling himself among the grand Seignior's guards, held up the paper so high, and for so long a time, and made such a noise, that the Sultan perceived it, and took the memoir himself.

Some days after, the Sultan, in answer to the king of Sweden's complaints, sent him twenty-five Arabian horses, one of which that had carried his highness, was covered with a saddle and housling enriched with

precious stones, and the stirrups were of massy gold. With this present he sent an obliging letter, but conceived in general terms, and such as gave reason to suspect that the minister had done nothing without the Sultan's consent. Chourlouly also, who knew how to dissemble, sent five very curious horses to the king. But his majesty, with a haughty air, told the person that brought them. *Go back to your master, and tell him, that I don't receive presents from my enemies.*

M. Poniatosky having already had the courage to get a petition presented against the grand visir, then formed the dangerous design of deposing him. He knew the visir was no favourite of the Sultan's mother, and was the aversion both of Kissler aga, the chief of the black eunuchs, and of the aga of the Janisaries: he encouraged all three to speak against him. It was very strange to see a Christian, a Pole, an agent, without character, of a Swedish king, that had fled for refuge to the Turks, caballing publickly in a manner at the Porte against a vice-roy of the Ottoman empire, and such a one too, as was both an useful minister, and a favourite of his master. Poniatosky had never succeeded, and the bare attempt had cost him his life, had not a stronger power than all those in his interests given the last blow to the grand visir Chourlouly's fortune.

At this juncture the Czar having quartered his forces in Lithuania, and given orders for carrying on the siege of Riga, returned to Muscow, to shew his people a sight as new as any thing he had yet done in his kingdom. It was a triumph very little inferior to that of the old Romans. He made his entry into Muscow on the first of January 1710, under seven triumphal arches erected in the streets, adorned with all that the climate could furnish, and a flourishing trade, as his industry had made it, could import. The procession began with a regiment of guards, followed by the pieces of artillery taken from the Swedes at Lesnow and Pultawa; each of which

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was drawn by eight horses covered with scarlet housings reaching down to the ground. Then came the standards, kettle drums, colours worn at these two battles, carried by the officers and soldiers that had taken them: all these spoils were followed by the finest troops of the Czar. After they had filed off, appeared in a chariot made for that purpose, the litter of Charles XII. found in the field of battle at Pultawa all broken to pieces by two cannon shot. Behind this litter marched all the prisoners two by two, among which was Count Piper first minister of Sweden, the famous Mareschal Rencchild, count Levenhaup, the generals Slipenbak, Stakelburgh- and Hamilton, all the officers and soldiers, who were afterwards dispersed in great Russia. They were immediately followed by the Czar, on the same horse he rid upon at the battle of Pultawa. A little behind him appeared the generals that had their share in the success of this battle. After them came another regiment of guards; and the waggons loaded with Swedish ammunition brought up the rear.

This solemn procession was attended with the ringing of all the bells in Muscow, with the sound of drums, kettle drums, trumpets, and an infinite number of musical instruments answering each other with volleys discharged from 200 pieces of cannon, and the acclamations of 500 000 men, who at every stop the Czar made in his triumphal entry, cried out, *God preserve the emperor our Father.*

A Greek named Cantemir, made prince of Moldavia by the Turks, joined the Czar, whom he already looked upon as a conqueror and made no scruple to betray the sultan, of whom he held his principality, for the sake of a Christian prince, from whom he expected much greater advantages. The Czar entred into a secret alliance with him, received him into his army, and marching up the country, arrived in June 1711, at the northern side of the river Hierasus, now Pruth, near Jazy, the capital of Moldavia.

As soon as the grand visir received the news that Peter Alexiowitz was come thither, he immediately left the camp at Belgrade, and followed the course of the Danube, proposed to pass that river on a bridge of boats near Saccia, in the very same place where Darius formerly built a bridge that bore his name. The Turkish army marched with so much expedition, that they soon came in sight of the Muscovites, the river Pruth being between them.

The Czar, sure of the prince of Moldavia, little thought the subjects would fail him. But the Moldavians are often in a different interest from that of their master, they liked the Turkish government, which is never fatal to any but to the grandes, and affects a lenity to people that are its tributaries. They feared the Christians, especially the Muscovites, who had upon all occasions used them barbarously. They brought all their provisions to the Ottoman army. The undertakers who had engaged to furnish the Muscovites with provisions, performed their promise to the grand visir, though it was made to the Czar. The Walachians, whose country adjoins to that of Moldavia, shewed the same regard to the Turks; to such a degree had the remembrance of former cruelties alienated their minds from the Muscovites.

The Czar thus frustrated of his hopes, which perhaps he had upon too light grounds taken up, found his army on a sudden destitute of provisions, and without forage. In the mean time the Turks passed the river that separated them from the enemy. All the Tartars, according to custom, swam over it, holding by the tails of their horses. The Saphi's, which are Turkish horse, did the same, because the bridges were not ready time enough.

At length, the whole army being got over, the visir pitched a camp, and fortified it with trenches. It is strange the Czar should not dispute the passage of the river, or at least repair his fault, by engaging the Turks immediately, instead of giving them time to

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tire out his army with fatigue and famine. But that prince seems in this campaign, to have taken all the steps that could lead to his ruin. He found himself without provisions, with the river Pruth behind him, and near 150 000 Turks before him, and about 40000 Tartars continually harassing him on the right hand and the left. Reduced to this extremity, he said publicly, *I am at least in as bad a case as my brother Charles was at Putawa.*

The indefatigable count Poniatosky, agent to the king of Sweden was in the grand visir's army with some poles and Swedes, who all thought the Czar's ruin inevitable.

As soon as Poniatosky saw that the armies must infallibly engage, he sent an express to the king of Sweden, who set out that moment for Bender, followed by forty officers, and enjoying by anticipation the pleasure of fighting the emperor of Muscovy.

After many a loss, and several destructive marches, the Czar was driven back upon the Pruth, and had no cover left but some *Chevaux de frise* and some waggons. A party of the Janesaries and Sophi's fell immediately upon his army in that defenceless condition, but they did it in a tumultuous and disorderly manner, and were received by the Muscovites with a resolution, which nothing but despair and the presence of their prince could inspire.

The Turks were twice repulsed. But the day following, M. Poniatosky advised the grand visir to starve out the Muscovite army, who being destitute of all provision, would, in a short time, be obliged, together with their emperor, to surrender at discretion.

The Czar has since that time, more than once acknowledged, that in all his life he never felt so much uneasiness, as he did that night. He revolved in his mind all that he had been doing for so many years for the glory and good of his nation; that so many great designs perpetually interrupted by successive wars

were now in all probability going to perish with him; before they were brought to perfection; that he must either die with hunger, or engage near 200000 men with feeble troops less by half the number than when they first set out; a cavalry almost dismounted, and the foot worn out with famine and fatigue.

About the beginning of the night he called general Czeremetof to him, and gave him a peremptory order to get every thing ready by break of day, to charge the Turks with bayonets at the muzzle of their muskets.

He gave express orders also to burn all the baggage, and that no officer should keep above one waggon; that in case of a defeat, the enemy however might not get the booty they expected.

Having settled every thing with the general in order to the battle, he retired to his tent full of grief, and seized with convulsions, a distemper he was often troubled with, and which came upon him with double the violence when he was under any great uneasiness. He forbid all persons to enter his tent in the night, upon any pretence whatsoever, not caring to have any remonstrances made to him against a desperate but necessary resolution, and much less that any one should be a witness to the melancholy condition he was in.

In the mean time the greatest part of his baggage was burnt according to his order, and all the army followed the example, tho' with much regret; but some buried such things as they set a more than ordinary value upon. The general officers had already given orders for the march, and endeavoured to inspire the army with a courage which themselves wanted: but the soldiers quite exhausted with fatigue and hunger, marched as men that had lost both their spirit and their hopes; and yet, to enervate their courage still more, had their ears filled with the shrieks and cries of women, of whom there was too great a number in the army. Every one expected death or

slavery to be their portion the next morning. What I relate is no exaggeration; for this is literally the account that was given by some officers who served in the army.

In this situation it was thought necessary to shew for peace to the Turks, and that the Czar must be persuaded into the proposal.

The grand visir's first demand was, that the Czar, with all his army, should surrender at discretion. The vice chancellor made answer, that his master designed to give him battle within a quarter of an hour, and that the Muscovites would all be cut to pieces, rather than submit to such dishonourable conditions. Osman seconded Shaffirof with fresh remonstrances.

Mahomet Baltagi was no soldier. He knew the Janisaries had been repulsed the day before, and was easily persuaded by Osman not to part with certain advantages for the hazard of a battle. He immediately granted a suspension of arms for six hours, and in that time the terms of the treaty were agreed upon and settled.

During the parly their happened an accident, which shews the word of a Turk is often more to be depended on than we imagine. Two Italian gentlemen, related to M. Brillo, lieutenant-colonel of a regiment of grenadiers in the Czar's service, going to look for forage, was taken by the Tartars, who carried them to their camp, and offered to sell them to an officer of the Janisaries. The Turk enraged at such a breach of the truces seized the Tartars, and carried them himself before the grand visir, together with the two prisoners.

The visir sent the gentlemen back that moment to the Czar, and ordered the principle Tartars concerned in carrying them off to be beheaded.

In the mean time the Kam of Tartary opposed the conclusion of a treaty, which took from him all hopes of pillage. Poniatosky seconded him with very urgent and pressing reasons. But Osman carried his

point, notwithstanding the impatience of the Tartar and the insinuations of Poniatosky.

The visir thought it enough for his master the grand Signior, to conclude an advantageous peace. He insisted, that the Muscovites should give up Asoph, burn the gallies that lay in that port, and demolish the main citadels upon the Paulus Maeotis; that the grand Seignior should have all the cannon and ammunition of those fortresses; that the Czar should draw off his troops from Poland, and give no farther disturbance to the few Cossacks that were under the protection of the Poles, nor to those that were subject to Turkey; and that for the future he should pay the Tartars a subsidy of 40000 equins *per annum*; an odious tribute long since imposed, but from which the Czar had delivered his country.

At length, the treaty was going to be signed, without so much as mentioning the king of Sweden; and all that Poniatosky could obtain from the visir, was to insert an article, by which the Muscovite should promise not to hinder the return of Charles XII. and which is pretty remarkable, it was stipulated in this article, that a peace should be concluded between the Czar and the king of Sweden, if they were so disposed, and could agree upon the terms of it.

On those conditions, the Czar had liberty to retreat with his army, cannon artillery, colours and baggage. The Turks furnished him with provisions and there was plenty of every thing in his camp within two hours after the signing of the treaty, which was begun, concluded and signed the 21st of July 1711.

Just as the Czar, rescued from the difficulties he was under, was drawing off with drums beating and ensigns displayed, came the king of Sweden, impatient of fighting, and eager to see his enemy in his hands. He had rid post above fifty leagues, from Bender to Jazy, and lighting at Count Poniatosky's tent, the count came up to him with a sorrowful

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countenance, and acquainted him by what means he had lost an opportunity which perhaps he would never recover.

The king enraged went directly to the grand visir, and with all his blood in his face upbraided him with the treaty he had concluded. *I have authority, says the grand visir, with a calm air, to wage war, and make peace. But, replied the king, have not you the whole Muscovite army in your power? our laws, says the visir with great gravity, commands us to grant our enemies peace, when they implore our mercy. Ah! replies the king in a passion, does it order you to clap up a bad treaty, when you have it in your power to make what terms you please? was it not incumbent upon you to carry the Czar prisoner to Constantinople?*

The Turk thus driven to a nonplus, answered sily, *And who should govern his empire in his absence? It is not fit that all kings should be out of their kingdoms.* Charles replied with a smile full of indignation, and then threw himself down upon a cushion. And looking upon the visir with an air of resentment and contempt, he stretched out his leg towards him, and entangling his spur in his robe, which he did by design, tore it; then rose up immediately, mounted his horse, and returned to Bender full of despair.

Poniatofsky continued some time longer with the grand visir, to try if he could prevail upon him by softer methods, to make some better terms with the Czar; but it being prayer-time, the Turk without giving one word of answer, went to wash and attend his devotions.

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## BOOK VI.

**F**ORTUNE, which before had been so favourable to the king of Sweden, bore hard upon him now even in the most trifling things. At his return he

found his little camp at Bender, and all his apartment under water, caused by an inundation of the Neister. He retired to some miles distance, near a village called Varnitza; and as if he had some secret pressages of his future fortune, built a large house of stone there, capable upon occasion of sustaining a siege of some hours. He furnished it also in a very magnificent manner, contrary to his custom, but in order to keep the Turks more in awe.

Besides this, he built two more, one for his chancery, and the other for his favourite Grothusen, who kept a table at his expence. While the king was thus employed in building at Bender, as if he had designed to continue always in Turkey, Baltagi Mahomet being more apprehensive than ever, of the intrigues and complaints of this prince at the Porte, had sent the emperor of Germany's resident to Vienna, to procure a passage for the king of Sweden through the hereditary territories of the house of Austria. This envoy came back in three weeks time, with a promise from the imperial regency, that they would pay Charles XII. all due honours, and conduct him safely into Pomerania.

In the mean time, M. de Poniatofsky wrote, and that from the camp of the grand visir, an account of the campaign of Pruth, wherein he accused Baltagi Mahomet of cowardise and treachery. This account he entrusted to an old Janisary enraged at the visir's weakness, and moreover gained by Poniatofsky's presents, who having got leave, went and presented the letter with his own hands to the Sultan.

Poniatofsky set out from the camp some days after, and went to the Ottoman Porte, to cabal against the grand visir, as usual.

All circumstances seemed to favour the design. The Czar now at liberty, was in no haste to perform his promises. It is customary for princes to send golden keys to the Sultan, when they deliver up any towns to the Turks. The keys of Asoph were not come,

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and the grand visir, who was responsible for them, being apprehensive of his master's resentment, durst not appear in his presence.

The old visir Chourlouly, then in banishment at Mytelene, thought this a proper opportunity to deprive Achmet of the throne, and to set up Ibrahim his nephew, and eldest son to Mustaffa, a young prince, who was at that time a prisoner of state together with his brother Mahomud.

To bring about this design, it was necessary that Mahomet Baltagi should be prevailed upon to make sure of the Sultan, by marching directly up to Constantinople with the Janisaries.

Mahomet had no inclination to any rash and hazardous enterprizes; so the old visir applied himself to Osman aga his lieutenant, who entirely governed him. But the letters being intercepted, Chourlouly and Osman were beheaded, which is reckoned an infamous punishment in Turkey, and their heads laid in the hall of the divan. Among Osmand's treasures, were found a ring which had been presented by the Czarina, and 200,000 pieces of gold, in Saxon, Polish, and Muscovite coin.

As to Baltagi Mahomet, he was banished for having been made choice of without his knowledge, to be the instrument of Chourlouly and Osman's plot.

The king, who was perpetually solliciting the Porte to send him back thro' Poland with a numerous army. The divan was indeed determined to send him back, but it was only with a guard of seven or eight thousand men, not as a king they were minded to succour, but as a guest they were desirous to be rid of. With this view Sultan Achmet wrote him the following letter.

Most powerful among kings that worship Jesus, redresser of wrongs and injuries, and protector of rights in the ports and republics of South and North; shining in majesty, love of honour and

glory, and of our sublinie Port, Charles king of Sweden, whose enterprises God crown with success.

**A**S soon as the most illustrious Achmet formerly Chiroux Paschi, shall have the honour to deliver you this letter adorned with our imperial seal, be perswaded and convinced of the truth of our intentions contained therein, viz. That though we had designed to send our ever victorious army against the Czar, a second time; yet that prince, to avoid our just resentment at his delaying the execution of a treaty concluded on the banks of the Pruth, and renewed again at our sublime Porte, having surrendered into our hands the castle and city of Asoph, and having endeavoured by the mediation of the English and Dutch ambassadors, our antient allies, to cultivate a lasting peace with us, we have granted his request, and delivered his plenipotentiaries, who remain with us as hostages, our imperial ratification, having first received his from their hands.

We have given our inviolable and salutary orders to the right honourable and valiant Deloet Gherai, Han of Boudgiak in Crim Tartary, Noghai and Circassia, and to Ismael our sage counsellor and noble serusquier of Bender, (whom God preserve and augment their magnificence and wisdom) for your return thro' Poland, according to your first design, which has been laid before us in your name. You must therefore to set forward the next winter, under the guidance of providence, and with an honourable guard, in order to return to your own territories, taking care, to pass thro' Poland in a peaceable and friendly manner.

You shall be provided with every thing necessary for your journey by my subline Porte, as well money as men, horses and waggons. But we advise and exhort you above all things, to give the fullest and most expresse orders to all the Swedes and other soldiers in your retinæ, not to make any havock, or be guilty of any action that may either directly or indirectly tend to break this peace and alliance.



*Hereby you will preserve our good-will, of which we shall endeavour to give you as great and frequent proofs as we shall have opportunities. The troops designed to attend you, shall receive orders agreeable to your imperial intentions in this particular.*

*Given at our sublime port of Constantinople, the 14th of the month Rebyal Eureb, 1124, which answers to the 19th of April, 1712.*

However, this letter did not put the king of Sweden entirely out of hopes. He wrote the Sultan word, that he was ready to go, and should always acknowledge the favours his highness had heaped upon him; but he added, that he thought the Sultan too just to send him away with no other guard than that of a flying camp, in a country already over-run with the Czar's troops.

Achmet was so little acquainted with what passed in Poland, that he sent an aga to see whether the Czar's forces were still there or not. Two Secretaries of the king of Sweden, who understood the Turkish language, accompanied the aga, in order to confront him in case of a false report.

This aga saw the forces with his own eyes, and gave the Sultan a true account of the matter. Achmet in a rage, was going to strangle the grand visir; but the favourite who protected him, and thought he might have occasion for him, obtained his pardon, and kept him some time longer in the ministry.

The grand Seignior without more ado committed the Muscovite ambassadors, already as much accustomed to go to prison, as an audience, to the seven towers. War was declared afresh against the Czar, the horse-tails displayed, and orders given to all the Basha's, to raise an army of 200000 fighting men. The Sultan himself quitted Constantinople, and fixed his court at Adrianople, in order to be nearer the seat of war.

In the mean time a solemn embassy from Augustus and the republic of Poland to the grand Seignior was

upon the road at Adrianople. At the head of this embassy was the palatine of Massovia, with a retinue of above 300 persons.

These were all seized and imprisoned in the suburbs of the city. Never was the Swedish party fuller of hopes than upon this occasion: but these great preparations came to nothing, and all their expectations were disappointed.

The divan having thus determined Charles's fate, Ismael Iersquier of Bender repaired to Varnitsa, where the king was incamped, and acquainted him with the resolutions of the Porte, giving him to understand, in a civil manner, that there was no time to delay, but that he must be gone.

Charles made no other answer than this. That the grand Seignior had promised him an army, and not a guard, and that kings ought to keep their word.

He told the basha of Bender, that he could not go till he had wherewithal to pay his debts. For though his Thaim had for a long time been regularly paid, his generosity had always forced him to borrow. The basha asked him, how much he wanted? the king answered at a venture, a thousand purses, which amounts to 1500000 livres of French money, full weight. The basha wrote to the Porte about it; and the Sultan, instead of 1000 purses, granted him 1200, which he sent to the basha of Bender.

When the 1200 purses were arrived, his treasurer Grothusen, who, by residing so long in Turkey, had learnt to speak the language, went to wait upon the basha without an interpreter, in hopes to get the 1200 purses from him, and afterwards to form some new intrigue at the Porte; falsely imagining, as they always did, that the Swedish party would at length arm the Ottoman empire against the Czar.

Grothusen told the Bashah, that the king's equipages could not be got ready without money, But we, says the Bashah, shall defray all your expences. Your master will be at no charge, while he continues under my protection.

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Gruthusen replied, that the difference between the Turkish equipage and those of the Franks, was so great, that they were under a necessity of applying to the Swedish and Polish artificers at Varnitisa.

He assured him, that his master was willing to go, and that his money would facilitate and hasten his departure. The too credulous basha gave him the 1200 purses, and within a few days came and desired the king in a very respectful manner to give orders for their departing. But he was extremely surpris'd, when the king told him he was not ready to go, and that he wanted a thousand purses more. The basha, confounded with this answer, was speechless for some time, and then went to a window, where he was seen to shed some tears. Afterwards, turning to the king, I shall lose my head, says he, for having obliged your majesty. I have given you the 1200 purses against the express orders of my sovereign. With these words, he took his leave, and was going away full of grief, when the king stopped him, and told him, he would make an excuse for him to the Sultan. Ah! replied the Turk, as he was going out, my master can punish faults, but not excuse them.

Ismael basha went to acquaint the kam of Tartary with the news. The kam having received the same order with the basha, not to suffer the 1200 purses to be deliver'd before the king's departure, and having consented to the delivery of them, was as apprehensive of the grand Seignior's resentment as the basha himself. They wrote both of them to the Porte to clear themselves, and intreated his highness not to impute the king's refusal to their disobedience.

Charles persisting in the notion that the kam and the basha designed to deliver him up into the hands of his enemies, ordered Mr. Funk, his envoy at the Ottoman court, to lay his complaints against them before the grand Seignior, and to ask for 1000 purses more. But he did it with a view to be refused, and

that he might have a fresh pretence for not departing. All the answer he received was to be clapt up in prison. The Sultan, in a passion, called an extraordinary divan, and (which is very rarely done) spoke himself as follows.

*I scarce ever knew the king of Sweden, but by his defeat at Pultawa, and the request he made to me to grant him a sanctuary in my empire, I have not, I believe, any need of him, or any reason to love or fear him: yet, without consulting any other motives than the hospitality of a Musselman, and my own generosity, which sheds the dew of its favour upon the great as well as the little, upon strangers as well as my own subjects, I have received and assisted him, his ministers, officers and soldiers, in every respect, and for three years and a half have never held my hand from loading him with presents.*

*I have granted him a very considerable guard to conduct him into his own country. He has asked for 1000 purses to defray some expences, though I pay them all. Instead of a thousand I have granted him 1200. After getting these out of the hands of the Jerasquier of Bender, he desires 1000 more, and refuses to go, under pretence, that the guard is too little, whereas it is but too large to pass through the country of a friend and ally.*

*I ask you then, whether it is a breach of the laws of hospitality, to send this prince away? and whether foreign princes ought to accuse me of cruelty or injustice, in case I should be obliged to make him go by force? All the divan answered, was, That the grand Seignior might lawfully do what he had said.*

The musty declared, That the Musselmans are not bound to hospitality towards infidels, much less toward the ungrateful, and he granted his festa, a kind of mandate, which, for the most part, accompanies the important orders of the grand Seignior. These festas are reverend as oracles, tho' the persons from whom they come are as much the Sultan's slaves as any others.



The basha of Bender received the order at the kam's, from whence he went immediately to Varnitsa, to know whether the king would go away in a friendly manner, or force him to execute the Sultan's orders.

Charles not used to this threatening language, could not command his temper. Obey your master, says he to the basha, if you dare, and be gone out of my presence. The basha, went off in a rage, and meeting Fabricius by the way, he called out to him without stopping, the king won't hearken to reason; you will see strange things presently. The same day he cut off the king's provisions, and removed the guard of Janisaries. He sent also to the Poles and Cossacks at Varnitsa, to let them know, that if they had a mind to have any provisions, they must leave the king of Sweden's camp, and come and put themselves under the protection of the Porte at Bender. They all obeyed, and left the king, with only the officers of his household and 300 Swedes, to cope with 20,000 Tartars, and 6000 Turks. Now there was no more provision in the camp either for man or horse; and in the mean time the Turks and Tartars invested the little camp on all sides.

The king, with all the calmness in the world, appointed his 300 Swedes to make regular fortifications, and worked at them himself. His chancellor, treasurer, secretaries, valet de chambres, and all his domestics, put their hands to the work. Some barricaded the windows, others took the bars behind the doors, and planted them in form of buttresses.

In the mean time, every thing being ready for the assault, Charles's death seemed inevitable; but the Sultan's command not being positive to kill him, in case of resistance, the basha prevailed upon the kam to let him send him an express that moment to Adrianople, where the grand Seignior then was, to receive his highness's last orders.

At length, the grand Seignior's order being come, to put to the sword all the Swedes that should make

the least resistance, and not to spare the life of the king; the basha had the civility to shew Fabricius the order, to the intent that he might try his utmost to prevail upon Charles. Fabricius went immediately to acquaint him with this bad news. *Have you seen the order you speak of?* says the king. *I have,* replies Fabricius. *Tell them then,* says the king, *that this order is a second forgery of theirs, and that I will not go.* Fabricius fell at his feet, put himself in a passion, and reproached him with his obstinacy; but all was to no purpose. *Go back to your Turks,* says the king to him smiling, *if they attack me, I know how to defend myself.*

The king's chaplains also fell upon their knees before him, conjuring him not to expose the wretched remains of Pulstawa, and above all his own sacred person to certain death; adding besides, that resistance in this case was a most unwarrantable action, and that it was a violation of the laws of hospitality to resolve to continue with strangers against their will, who had so long and generously supported him. The king, who had shewed no resentment against Fabricius, grew warm upon this occasion, and told his priests, that he took them to pray for him, and not to give him advice.

General Hoord, and general Dardoff, whose opinion it had always been, not to venture a battle, which in the consequence must prove fatal, shewed the king their breasts covered with wounds they received in his service, and assuring him they were ready to die for him; begged that it might at least be upon a more necessary occasion. *I know,* says the king, *by your wounds, and mine own, that we have fought valiantly together. You have hitherto done your duty, do it again now.*

It was not long before they saw the Turks and Tartars advancing, in order of battle, to attack the little fortress, with ten pieces of ordnance and two

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mortar pieces. The horse-tails waved in the air, the clarions sounded, the cries of *alla, alla*, were heard on all sides. Baron Grothusen took notice that the Turks did not mix any abusive language against the king in their cries, but only called him *demis-aash*, which signifies, head of iron, and resolved that moment to go alone and unarmed out of the fortifications. He advanced up to the line of the Janisaries, who had almost all of them received money from him, 'Ah, what my friends!' says he to them in their own language, 'are you come to massacre 500 defenceless Swedes? you brave Janisaries, who have pardoned 100000 Muscovites upon their crying Ammon; (*i. e.* pardon) to you; have you forgot the kindness you have received from us? and would you assassinate that great king of Sweden, whom you loved so much and who has been so generous to you? my friends, he asks but three days, and the Sultan's orders are not so strict as you are made to believe.'

These words produced an effect which Grothusen himself did not expect. The Janisaries swore upon their beards they would not attack the king, and that they would give him the three days he demanded. In vain was the signal given for the assault. The Janisaries, far from obeying, threaten to fall upon their leaders, if three days were not granted to the king of Sweden. They came to the basha of Bender's tent in a body, crying out that the Sultan's orders were forged. To this unexpected insurrection, the basha had nothing to oppose but patience.

The basha returning to Bender, assembled all the officers of the Janisaries and the oldest soldiers, and both read to them, and shewed them the positive order of the Sultan, and the musti's fella.

Sixty of the oldest of them, with venerable grey beards, who had received a thousand presents from the king's hand, offered to go in person to him, and intreat him to put himself into their hands, and permit them to serve him as guards,

But neither the proposal of the old Janisaries, nor Poniatosky's letters could in the least convince the king, that it was possible for him to give way without injuring his honour. He chose rather to die by the hands of the Turks, than be in any manner their prisoner. He dismissed the Janisaries without seeing them, and sent them word, that if they did not go about their business he'd shave their beards for them; which, in the east, is reckoned the most provoking affront that can be offered.

These old soldiers, fired with resentment, returned home, crying as they went, 'Down with this head of iron! since he is resolved to perish, let him perish.' They gave the basha an account of their commission, and acquainted their comrades at Bender with the strange reception they had met with. Upon this every one swore to obey the basha's orders without delay; and they were now as impatient of going to the assault, as they had been averse the day before.

The word was given that moment. They marched up to the entrenchments. The Tartars were already waiting for them, and the cannon began to play.

The Janisaries on one side, and the Tartars on the other, forced the little camp in an instant. Twenty Swedes had scarce time to draw their Swords, before the whole 300 were surrounded, and taken prisoners without resistance. The king was then on horseback between his house and his camp, with the generals Hoord, Darduff and Sparre; and seeing that all his soldiers had suffered themselves to be taken before his eyes, he said in cold blood to these three officers, *Let us go and defend the house. We'll fight*, adds he with a smile, *pro aris et focis*.

Immediately he gallops up to the house with them, where he had placed about forty domestics and centinels, and which they had fortified in the best manner they could.



These generals, however accustomed to the obstinate intrepidity of their master, could not help being surprized, that in cold blood, and with a jaunting air, he should be resolved to stand out against ten pieces of cannon and a whole army. They followed him with some guards and domestics, to the number of twenty persons.

But when they came to the door, they found it beset with Janisaries. Besides, near 200 Turks and Tartars had already got in at a window, and made themselves masters of all the apartments, except a great hall, whether the king's domestics had retired. It happened luckily, that this hall was near the door, at which the king proposed to enter with his little troop of twenty persons. He threw himself off his horse with pistol and sword in hand, and his followers did the same.

The Janisaries fell upon him on all sides, being encouraged by the basha's promise of eight ducats of gold to each man that should but touch his clothes, in case they could not take him. He wounded and killed all that came near him. A Janisary, whom he had wounded, clapped his blunderbuss to his face, and if the arm of a Turk had not jostled him, occasioned by the crowd, that moved backwards, and forwards like waves, the king had been killed. The ball grazed upon his nose, and took off a piece of his ear, and then broke general Hoord's arm, whose fate it was to be always wounded by his master's side.

The king struck his sword into the Janisary's breast, and at the same time his domestics, who were shut up in the great hall, opened the door to him. He enters as swift as an arrow with his little troop, and in an instant they shut the door again, and barricade it with all they can find.

Thus was Charles XII. shut up in this hall with all his attendants, amounting to about threescore men, officers, guards, secretaries, valet de chambres and domestics of all kinds.

The Janisaries and Tartars pillaged the rest of the house and filled the apartments. *Come*, says the king, *let us go and drive out these Barbarians!* and putting himself at the head of his men, he, with his own hands, opened the door of the hall, which faced his bed-chamber, goes into it, and fires upon the plunderers.

The Turks loaden with booty, being terrified at the sudden appearance of the king whom they had been used to reverence, threw down their arms, and leapt out of the window, or fled into the cellars. The king taking advantage of the confusion they were in, and his own men being animated with this piece of success, they pursued the Turks from chamber to chamber killed or wounded those that had not made their escape, and in a quarter of an hour cleared the house of the enemy.

The king, in the heat of the fight, perceived two Janisaries who hid themselves under his bed. He thrust his sword through one of them, and killed him; but the other asked pardon crying, *Amman*. I grant you your life, says the king, upon condition that you go and give the basha a faithful account of what you have seen.

The Swedes at length become masters of the house, shut the windows again, and barricadoed them. In this situation, they had no want of arms, a ground-chamber full of muskets and powder having escaped the tumultuous search of the Janisaries. This they made a very seasonable use of, firing close upon the Turks thro' the windows, and killing 200 of them in less than half a quarter of an hour.

The cannon played against the house; but the stones being very soft, it only made holes in the wall but demolished nothing.

The kam of Tartary, and the basha, who were desirous of taking the king alive, being ashamed to lose time and men, and employ an army against sixty persons, thought it proper to set fire to the house, in order to oblige the king to surrender. For this pur-

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pose, they ordered some arrows twisted about with lighted matches, to be shot upon the roof, and against the door and windows; by which means, the house was immediately in flames. The roof all on fire was ready to tumble upon the Swedes. The king, with a very sedate air, gave orders to extinguish the fire; and finding a little barrel full of liquor, he laid hold of it himself, and with the assistance of two Swedes, threw it upon the place where the fire was most violent; then he discovered that it was full of brandy. But the hurry which is inseparable from such a state of confusion, hindered him from thinking of it before.

A centinel named Walberg, ventured in this extremity to cry, that there was a necessity for surrendering. What a strange man, says the king; is this, to imagine that it is not more glorious to be burnt, than taken prisoner! another centinel, named Rosen, had the thought to say, that the chancery house, which was but fifty paces off, has a stone roof, and was proof against fire; that it would do well to sally out, and gain that house, and there stand upon their defence. A true Swede, cries the king; then he embraced him, and made him a colonel on the spot.

The Turks, who all this while encompassed the house, were struck with fear and admiration, to see the Swedes continue in it, notwithstanding it was all in flames. But they were much more surprized when they saw them open the doors, and the king and his men fall upon them in a desperate manner. Charles, and his principal officers were armed with sword and pistol. Every one fired two pistols at a time in the instant that the door opened; and in the twinkling of an eye, throwing away their pistols, and drawing their swords, they drove the Turks back the distance of fifty paces; but the moment after this little troop was surrounded. The king being booted, according to custom, threw himself down with his spurs. Immediately one and twenty Janisaries fall upon him,

disarm him, and bear him away to the basha's quarter's some taking hold of his arms, and others of his legs, as the manner is to carry a person for fear of incommoding him.

As soon as the king saw himself in their hands, he looked upon the Janisaries with a smiling countenance, and they carried him, crying *alla*, with a mixture of anger and respect in their faces. His officers were taken at the same time, and stript by the Turks and Tartars. It was on the 12th of February, 1713, that this strange adventure happened.

## BOOK VII.

**T**HE basha of Bender waited with some state in his tent, expecting the king; and had by him one Marco for an interpreter. He received the king with great respect, and prayed him to repose upon a sofa, but the king took no notice of his civilities, and continued standing.

The next morning they conveyed the king in a chariot covered with scarlet towards Adrianople. While they were carrying this king disarmed and a prisoner, who not only before had given law to so many countries, had been arbiter of the north, and the terror of all Europe; there happened to appear in the very same place another instance of the frailty of human greatness. King Stanislaus was seized in the Turks dominions, and carried prisoner to Bender at the same time that they were conveying Charles to Adrianople.

Stanislaus, unsupported by the hand that made him king having no money, and consequently no friends in Poland, retired to Pomerania, and as he was not able to preserve his own kingdom, had done his best to defend his benefactor's. But in going to take advice of Charles, in relation to his abdicating the kingdom of Poland, he was stopped at Yassi in Moldavia. When



he came near Bender, the basha, who was returning back from Charles, sent him an Arabian horse with fine furniture.

Stanislaus was received at Bender with a discharge of the artillery; and bating that he was a prisoner, had no great cause to complain of his usage there.

As for Charles, he was going to Adrianople, and the town was full of discourse before hand about the battle. The Turks both admired and blamed him; but the divan was so exasperated, that they threatened to confine him in one of the islands in the Archipelago.

Some weeks after, there was a sudden change in the seraglio, which the Swedes affirm was owing to a letter that had been delivered to the Sultan in the king their masters behalf. The musti was immediately deposed, the kam of the Tartars banished to an island in the Archipelago.

In the mean time, Charles was carried to a little castle called Demirtash, near Adrianople, where multitudes of Turks were waiting to see him alight. He was conveyed out of the chariot to the castle upon a Sopha; but that he might not be seen, he put a cushion over his head.

He was buried here in oblivion and inactivity for about eleven months; which following clofs upon the most violent exercise, made that illness real, which he had some time feigned. In Europe, they verily thought him dead; and the regency which he settled when he left Stockholm, hearing nothing from him, the senate waited on the princess Ulric Elonora, to desire she would take the regency in her brother's absence. She did accept of it; but finding the senate had a mind to force her to a peace with the Czar and Denmark, that on every side were falling upon Sweden, which she knew the king would never ratify, she resigned the regency, and wrote him a full account of the matter to Turkey.

The king received her letters at Demotioa, and

those despotic notions which he had early imbibed made him quite forget that ever Sweden had been a free state, or that the senate used to share in the government of it with their former kings.

Wherefore, to prevent any attempts in Sweden against his authority, and that he might defend his country; hoping nothing more now from the Ottomans but depending only on himself: he signified to the grand visir his desire to be gone, by the way of Germany.

So the day was set; and Charles before he went, was willing to make a figure as a king, notwithstanding the wretched condition he was in. He made Grothusen his ambassador extraordinary, and sent him in form to take his leave at Constantinople, with a train of fourscore persons richly dressed.

On the first of October, 1714, the king began his journey. A capagi Basha, with six Chiaoux, went to attend him from Demirtash, whether he had moved a few days before. The presents they brought him, from the grand Seignior were, a large tent of scarlet embroidered with gold, a sabre set with jewels, eight beautiful Arabian horses with fine saddles and stirrups of massive silver.

The convoy consisted of threescore carriages, laden with all sorts of provision, and three hundred horse.

When he came to the Turkish frontiers, Stanislaus was going thence another way into Germany, intending to retire into the dutchy of Deux Ponts. Charles assigned to Stanislaus the revenue of this dutchy, which was then reckoned to be about seventy thousand crowns.

When the king of Sweden came to the German frontiers, he found the emperor had given orders for his reception every where with proper state. Wherever harbingers had fixed his rout, great preparations were making to entertain him; and a world of people came to behold the man, whose conquests and misfortunes, whose least actions, nay, and lying still,

had made so much noise both in Enrope and in Asia. But Charles had no mind to so much pomp, or to make a shew of the prisoner of Bender: but was rather thinking how he might retrieve his ill fortune with some noble stroke before he came back to Stockholm.

So dismissing his Turkish attendants at Targowitz, on the borders of Transylvania; he called his people together in a yard, and bid them take no thought for him, but make the best of their way to Strailfund in Pomerania, about three hundred leagues from thence, up the Baltic sea.

He took no body with him, but one During, a young man, whom he made a colonel afterwards. He parted chearfully with his officers, leaving them in great confusion and concern for him. For a disguise he wore a black peruke, instead of his own hair, a gold laced hat, grey cloaths, and a blue coat, passing for a German officer, and rid post with only colonel During.

Having rid all the first day without stopping, During not being used to such fatigues, fainted away when he came to alight. The king would not stay a moment, but asked During, *What money he had?* he said, *about a thousand crowns.* *Give me half,* says the king, *I see you cannot go on; I'll go without you.* During begged he would stay three hours, and he was sure by that time he should be able to go on, and desired him to consider the danger of going alone. The king would not be perswaded, but made him give him the five hundred crowns, and called for horses. During, afraid of what might happen, bethought himself of this contrivance. He takes the post-master aside: *Friend,* says he, *this is my cousin, we are going upon business together, and you see he won't stay for me but three hours; prithee give him the worst horse you have; and let me have a post chaise, or some such thing.*

He put a couple of dueats into the man's hands, and was obeyed punctually: so the king had a horse

that was both lame and resty. Away he went about ten at night, through the snow, and wind, and rain. His fellow-traveller, after a few hours rest, set out again in a chaise with very good horses. About break of day he overtook the king, with his horse tired, and walking towards the next stage.

Then he was forced to get in with Daring, and slept upon the straw; and afterwards they never stopped, but went on, on horseback all day, and sleeping in a chaise at night.

Thus, in sixteen days riding, and often in danger of being taken, he came at last upon the 21st of November 1714, to the gates of Stralsund, about one in the morning.

The king said, he was a courier from the king in Turkey, and must speak immediately with general Dukar the governor. The centinel told him, it was too late, the governor was a-bed, and he must stay till day light.

The king said it was an affair of consequence; and declared if he did not go directly and wake the governor, they should all be hanged in the morning. At last a sergeant went and called the governor; and Dukar, thinking it might be some general officers, ordered the gates to be opened, and the courier was brought up to his chamber.

Dukar, rubbing his eyes, asked, *What news of his majesty?* the king took him by the shoulder, *what,* says he, *Dukar have my best subjects forgot me?* the general, could scarce believe his eyes, and jumping out of bed, embraced his masters knees with tears of joy. The news was all over the town in an instant. Every body got up; the soldiers came about the governor's house. The streets were full of people, asking if the news were true? the windows were illuminated, the conduits ran with wine, and the artillery fired.

However, the king was put to bed, which was more than he had been for sixteen days; they were

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forced to cut off his boots, his legs were so swollen with the fatigue. He had neither linnen, nor cloaths; and they provided in haste whatever they could find to fit him. When he had slept some hours, the first thing he did was to review his troops, and examine the fortifications. And that very day he sent out orders into all parts for renewing the war with more vigour than ever against all his enemies.

But Sweden had lost all her foreign provinces, and had neither trade, nor money, nor credit; her veteran troops were either killed, or died for want. Above 100000 Swedes were slaves in Muscovy; and as many more sold to the Turks and Tartars. The very species of men was visibly decayed in the country; but notwithstanding all this, their hopes revived as soon as ever they heard their king was come to Stralsund.

Such strong impressions of admiration and respect reigned in the hearts of all his subjects, that multitudes of young people came out of all parts of the country, and offered themselves to be listed, hardly leaving hands enough at home for cultivating their lands.

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## BOOK VIII.

**T**HE king, during these preparations, gave his only sister, Ulrica Eleonora in marriage to Frederick prince of Hesse Cassel.

This marriage was not honoured with the king's presence, who was now busy in finishing the fortifications of Stralsund, a place of great importance, which was in danger from the kings of Denmark and Prussia. However, he made his brother-in-law generallissimo of all the Swedish forces. This prince had served the states general in the French war, and was esteemed a good soldier, which went a good way towards his match with Charles's sister.

At the mouth of the Oder, a river that divides Pomerania, and passing by Stetin, falls into the Baltic, there is a little island called Ufedom.

Its situation makes it a place of vast importance; for it commands the Oder both on the right and left, and whoever has it, is master of the navigation of that river. The king of Prussia had dislodged the Swedes from thence, keeping that as well as Stetin in his hands, and said he did it purely for the sake of peace. The Swedes however had retaken it in 1715, and held two forts there, which were manned only with 250 Pomeranians, commanded by an old Swedish officer named Duslep or Duslerp, a man who well deserves to be remembered.

The king of Prussia sent 1500 foot, and 800 dragoons into the island. They landed without opposition on the side of Suine, which the Swedish officer had left, being a place of least importance, and unwilling to divide his little company, he retired with them into the castle of Penamondre, resolving to hold out to the last extremity.

So they were forced to make a siege in all the forms. They shipped their artillery at Stetin, and sent in a reinforcement of 1000 Prussian foot and 400 horse. Soon after they opened the trenches in two places, and played a brisk fire of cannon and mortars. In the time of the siege, a Swedish soldier, sent privately with a letter from Charles, found means to land on the island, and slip into Penamondre. He gave the letter to the commander, which was in these words.

**D***O not fire, till the enemy comes to the brink of the Fosse: stand on your defence till the last drop of blood. I commend you to your good fortune.*

CHARLES.

Duslerp, reading the note resolved to obey, and die, as he was bid, to serve his master. By break of day the assault was given. The besieged made their fire as directed, and killed abundance; but the

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Fosse was full, the breach large, and the besiegers too numerous. They entered in two different places at once. The commander now thought he had nothing more to do, than to obey his orders, and sell his life dear: he abandoned the breaches, intrenched his little company, who had all honour and courage enough to go with him, and placed them so that they should not be surrounded. The enemy came on, wondering he would not ask for quarter. But he fought a whole hour, and when he had lost half his soldiers, was killed at last with his lieutenant and major. There were then a hundred men left, and one officer, who asked their lives, and were taken prisoners. In the commander's pocket they found his master's letter, which was carried to the king of Prussia.

At the time when Charles sustained the loss of Usedom, and the neighbouring islands which were quickly taken. While Wismar was ready to surrender, with no fleet to help, and Sweden in the utmost danger, he himself was in Strailsund, and there besieged by 36,000 men.

There was in it a garrison of 9000 men, and more than all, the king of Sweden himself. The kings of Denmark and Prussia besieged it with an army of 36,000 men, consisting of Prussians, Danes, and Saxons.

Overagainst Strailsund upon the Baltic, is the island of Rugen, which serves for a defence to this place, whether the garrison and people could retire upon occasion, if they had but boats. This island was of great consequence to Charles, for he knew, if once the enemy were masters of it, he should soon be invested both by sea and land, and probably buried in the ruins of Strailsund, or else a prisoner to those whom he had before so much despised, and used so hardly. However, the ill state of his affairs had not allowed him to send a sufficient garrison to Rugen, there being no more than 2000 regular troops in all upon the island.

The enemy had been for three months making all proper dispositions for a descent thither, which was very difficult: but having built boats for the purpose, the prince of Anhalt, by the favour of good weather, landed at last 12000 men upon the place, on the 15th of November.

That very day the king had been defending an outwork for three hours, and coming back very much fatigued, he was told that the Danes and Prussians were in Rugen. It was eight o' clock at night, and he went directly in a fisher boat with Poniatosky, Grothusen, Daring, Dardorf, and by nine he got to the island. He joined his two thousand men, that were entrenched near a little haven about three leagues from where the enemy had landed. He marched with them at midnight in great silence. The prince of Anhalt had used a caution that seemed unnecessary, to entrench his camp. His officers expected nothing in the night, and little thought but Charles was safe at Strailfund. But the prince, who knew Charles much better, ordered a deep fosse with Chevaux de frize upon the edge of it, and took as much precaution as if he had to do with an army of superior force.

At two in the morning Charles came to the enemies camp, without making the least noise. His soldiers said one to another, 'come, let us pull up the Chevaux de frize; which words were heard by the centinels; and the alarm been quickly given, the enemies stood quick to their arms. The king taking up the Chevaux de frize, sees a great fosse. Ay, 'says he' impossible! this is more than I expected! not at all discouraged, and knowing nothing of their numbers, nor they of his, for the night favoured him in that, he resolved in an instant, jumped into the ditch, and some of the boldest with him, and all the rest went quickly after him. The Chevaux de frize were removed, the earth levelled, with trunks and branches of trees as they could find them, and the bodies of the dead



for fascines. The king, the generals, and the boldest of the officers and soldiers, got on one another's shoulders, as in assaults. The fight began in the enemies camp; and the vigour of the Swedes put the Danes and Prussians into great disorder; but their numbers being too unequal, the Swedes were repulsed in about a quarter of an hour, and repassed the fosse. The unfortunate king rallied his troops in the field, and the fight was renewed with equal warmth on both sides. He saw his favourite Grothusen and general Dardorf fall, and passed over the last in fighting before he was quite dead. During, his companion from Turkey to Stralsund, was killed before his face.

The king himself was shot near the left breast. Count Poniatolky was near, who having saved his life at Pultawa, had the good fortune to do the like again at Rugen, and remounted him.

The Swedes retired to a part of the island named Alteserra, where there was a fort they were yet masters of. From thence the king retired to Stralsund, obliged to leave those brave troops who had served him so well in this expedition; and they were all made prisoners of war in two days after.

In four days the enemy made an assault upon the hornwork, which they took twice, and were beaten off. The king was always fighting among the grenadiers; but at last their number prevailing, they became masters of it. Charles continued in the place two days after that, and staid till midnight upon a ravelin that was quite destroyed by the bombs and cannon. The next day, the chief officers entreated him to stay no longer in a place that could not be defended. But to retreat was now as dangerous as to stay. The Baltic was covered with Muscovite and Danish ships, and the king, after great danger, landed at Isted in Scandinavia, and came to Carelskroon in a very different condition from what he had gone in from thence fifteen years before in a ship of 120 guns, to give law to all the north.

Charles was going to make a second attempt upon

Norway, in October 1718, and he had laid matters so, that he did not doubt to be master of the country in six months. The winter is severe enough in Sweden, to kill the animals that live there; but he chose to go and conquer rocks, where for snow and ice it is much worse, rather than try to regain his beautiful provinces in Germany; but he hoped his new alliance with the Czar would put him soon in a condition to retake them. Besides, his ambition was pleased with the thought of taking a kingdom from his conquering enemy.

At the mouth of the river Tistendall, near the bay of Denmark, between Bahus and Anflo, stands Fredrichshall, a place of great strength and importance, which is reckoned to be the key of that kingdom. Charles sat down before it in the month of December. The cold was so extreme, that the soldiers could hardly break the ground. They might as well opened trenches in a rock; but the Swedes thought much of no fatigues in which they saw their king take his share so readily; and Charles himself did never suffer more than now. His constitution by eighteen years labour was hardened to that degree, that he would sleep in the open fields here in Norway, in the midst of winter upon boards or straw, covered only with his cloak, without prejudicing his health. Some of the soldiers in their posts fell down dead with cold, and others that were ready to die durst not complain when they saw their king bear it. A little before this expedition, hearing of a woman in Scandinavia, named Joan Dötter. that had lived several months upon nothing but water; he, who had studied all his life to bear the worst extremes that human nature can support, was resolved to try how long he was able to fast. He neither eat nor drank, for five days, and on the sixth, in the morning, he rid two leagues to his brother's, the prince of Hesse, where he eat very heartily, without feeling the least disorder, either from his long fasting, or his full eating afterwards.

On the 11th of December, being St. Andrew's day, he went about nine at night to see the trenches; and

finding the parallel not advanced to his mind, he was a little vexed at it; but mons<sup>r</sup> Megret, a French engineer, that conducted the siege, assured him, the place would be taken in eight days time. *We shall see*, says the king, *what can be done*; and going on with the engineer to examine the works, he stopped at a place where the boyau made an angle with the parallel, and kneeling upon the inner Talus, he leaned with his elbows on the parapet, to look upon the men that were carrying on the trenches by star-light.

The least circumstances are taken notice of, that relate to the death of so great a man as Charles XII. I must therefore take upon me to say, that all the conversation that has been reported by several writers, and M. de la Montraye among the rest, between the king and Megret the engineer, is absolutely false. And this is what I know to be the truth of the business.

The king stood with half his body exposed to a battery of cannon exactly levelled at the angle where he was. Not a soul was near him, but two Frenchmen, one was Montieur Siker his aid decamp, a man of great courage and conduct, who came into his service in Turkey; and was particularly attached to the prince of Hesse; the other was this engineer. The cannon fired with chain shot, to which the king stood more exposed than any of them. Not far behind was count Swerin, who commanded the trenches. Count Pöse, captain of the guard, and one Kulbert an aide-camp, received his orders. Siker and Megret saw the king the moment he fell upon the parapet, fetching a deep sigh. They ran to him, but he was quite dead, a ball of half a pound had struck him on the right temple, and made a hole big enough to turn three fingers in. His head lying over the parapet. The left eye was beat in, and the right quite out of its socket. He was dead in an instant; but he had the force in that instant to put his hand to the guard of his sword, and lay in that posture. At this, Megret, a man of great indifference, said, Let us be going, the play is done. Siker ran immediately, and

told count Swerin, and they all agreed to keep it private till the prince of Hesse could be informed of it. They covered the corps with a grey cloak; Siker put on him his hat and wig, and he was carried by the name of captain Carlßern through the troops, who saw their dead king pass, little thinking who it was.

The prince gave orders presently, that none should stir out of the camp, and that all the passes to Sweden should be guarded, till he should take measures for his wife to claim the crown, and to exclude the duke of Holstein, who might possibly pretend to it.

Thus fell Charles XII. king of Sweden, at the age of six and thirty years and a half, having known the extremes of prosperity, and of adversity, without being softened by the one, or in the least disturbed at the other. All his actions, even those of his private life, are always beyond any measure of probability. Perhaps he was the only man, to be sure he was the only king, that ever had lived without failings. He carried all the virtues of a hero to that excess, that they became faults, and were as dangerous as any of the opposite vices. His resolution grown to obstinacy, occasioned his misfortunes in Ukrania, and kept him five years in Turkey. His liberality degenerating into profusion, ruined Sweden. His courage becoming rashness, was the occasion of his death. His justice has been sometimes cruelty: and in his latter years, the maintaining his prerogative came not far short of tyranny. His great qualities, any one of which had been enough to make another prince immortal, were a misfortune to his country. He never began a quarrel with any, but he was rather over warm than wise in his resentment. He was the first that ever had the ambition to be a conqueror, without wishing to encrease his dominions. His desire to gain kingdoms, was only that he might give them away. The passion he had for glory, for war, and for revenge, made him too little of a politician, without which the world never before saw any prince a conqueror. Before a battle he was full of confidence, exceeding modest after a victory,



and in a defeat undaunted. Sparing others no more than he did himself, he made a small account of his own or his subjects lives or labours; a man extraordinary rather than a great man, and fitter to be admired than imitated. His life, however, may be a lesson to kings, and teach them, that a peaceful and happy reign is more to be desired than so much glory.

Charles XII. was tall and well shaped, he had a fine fore-head, large blew eyes full of sweetness, and a handsome nose: but the lower part of his face was disagreeable, and often the worse for his laugh, which was very unbecoming; he had little beard or hair; he spoke little, and it was habitual to him to answer only with that laugh. At his table there was always great silence. With all that inflexible temper of his, he was timorous and bashful, and often at a loss in company, for having given himself so wholly up to war, he knew but little of conversation. Before his long leisure in Turkey, he had never read any thing but Caesar's commentaries, and the history of Alexander. But he had writ some observations upon war, and his own campaigns, from 1700 to 1709. which he owned to the chevalier de Folard, and said the manuscript was lost at the unfortunate battle of Pultawa.

As to religion, though the sentiments of a prince need not influence other men; and the opinion of a king so ill informed as Charles, can be of no great weight in such matters; yet it is proper that men's curiosity should be satisfied in this as well as other particulars concerning him. I have it from the gentleman that gave me most of the materials of this history, that Charles was a serious Lutheran till the year 1707. He then saw the famous Philosopher Mr. Leibnitz at Leipzig; who was a great free-thinker, and talked very freely, having instilled his notions into more princes besides this. Charles learned from this philosopher a good deal of indifference for Lutheranism; which he carried afterwards much farther, when he had more time in Turkey, and had seen so many sorts of professions.

Of all his old opinions he retained but one, which was absolute predestination, a doctrine that favoured his courage, and justified his rash adventures. The Czar had much the same opinions as to religion and fate: but he was more free to talk of them, as he did of every thing else with his favourites very familiarly, for he had this advantage over Charles, that he had studied philosophy, and was a good speaker.

I cannot help taking notice here of a slander that is too often spread by credulous or ill-meaning people, who will have it, that when princes die, they were either poisoned or assassinated: and the story went in Germany, that Monsieur Siker was the man that killed the king of Sweden. That brave officer was very uneasy at the report a good while; and one day talking of it to me, he said these very words, 'I might have killed the king of Sweden, but I had such a veneration for the hero, that that though I had intended it, I could not offer to do it.'

As soon as he was dead, the siege of Fredrickshall was raised. The Swedes, who thought his glory rather a burden than a happiness, made peace with all their neighbours as fast as they could, and soon put an end to that absolute power which baron Goerts had made them weary of. The states went to a free election of king Charles's sister for their queen, and obliged her solemnly to renounce her hereditary right to the crown, holding it only by the people's choice. She promised with repeated oaths, never to set up arbitrary power; and afterwards, her love of power giving way to conjugal affection, she yielded the crown to her husband, and brought the states to chuse him who ascended the throne upon the same conditions.

Baron Goerts was seized immediately upon Charles's death, and condemned by the senate of Stockholm to be beheaded under the gallows; an instance rather of revenge than justice, and a cruel insult on the memory of a king whom Sweden yet admires.



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